

Founder of Patiala Kingdom

*Baba
Ala
Singh*

Kirpal Singh

***"God protects the downtrodden, elevates the holy, and
destroys the evil doers."***

Guru Gobind Singh

Baba Ala Singh

Founder of Patiala Kingdom

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**Guru Nanak Dev University
Amritsar**

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**Baba Ala Singh
Founder of Patiala Kingdom**

Based on Contemporary and Original Sources

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Maharaja Ala Singh

Dedicated to
Captain Amarinder Singh
Chief Minister, Punjab
Worthy Heir To The
Glorious Heritage of
Baba Ala Singh

ILLUSTRATIONS

Baba Ala Singh

Maharaja Amar Singh

Maharaja Sahib Singh

Maharaja Karam Singh

Maharaja Narinder Singh

Maharaja Mahender Singh

Maharaja Rajinder Singh

Maharaja Bhupinder Singh

Maharaja Yadvindra Singh

Captain Amarinder Singh

Map

The Marathi Letter

Genealogy

FOREWORD

Baba Ala Singh, the founder of Patiala Kingdom, was one of the greatest Sikhs of 18th century. He rightly understood Guru Gobind Singh's maxim that Deg (Symbol of service to humanity) and Teg (symbol of political power) must go hand in hand. He undertook to serve the lowest strata of society and founded several villages to settle them. According to Sikh tradition, he was running a 'langar' (free kitchen) for the poor and needy.

Before the rise of Baba Ala Singh, the Cis-Sutlej territory presented a picture of chaos and anarchy. The band of people belonging to different areas used to indulge in loot and plunder. Wealth and women were not safe. Baba Ala Singh uprooted the prevailing anarchy and established peace and brought prosperity which was his greatest boon to the inhabitants. After the invasion of Nadir Shah, there was a decline in the Central Government of the Mughals. The Marathas, the Rohillas, the Mansabdars of decaying Mughal empire were asserting their independence. There were Afghan invasions by Ahmad Shah Abdali. Baba Ala Singh dealt with everyone of them in such a way that they could not lay their hands on his territory. The sagacity with which Baba Ala Singh was able to meet the exigencies of the time was remarkable. He helped the Marathas in the fateful battle of Panipat.

Baba Ala Singh displayed par excellence his administrative ability which is so rare in the rulers. He dealt impartially with all religions and treated all subjects alike, gave high posts to the persons of all denominations. Muslims were recruited in his army and were given responsible posts.

In those days of moral laxity, Baba Ala Singh showed an exemplary character. He was always loyal to his wife who was very intelligent and served the interests of her husband. He never looked towards any other woman whatsoever.

Baba Ala Singh's successors right uptill now have assiduously followed the great warrior and humanist and have kept the torch of Sikhism aloft. They have proved worthy of the Great Guru's words for the Patiala State. The present incumbent, Captain Amarinder Singh who is donning the Chief Minister's Chair, is the living example of the glory built by Baba Ala Singh.

I am happy that Dr Kirpal Singh has put in a lot of labour in writing the book and improving second edition of the book. I hope that this will be beneficial to the scholars in particular and public in general.

S.P. Singh

Vice-Chancellor

**Guru Nanak Dev University
Amritsar.**

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Baba Ala Singh was one of the greatest Sikhs of Eighteenth Century. His pioneering career from peasant to the founder of a Raaj, is a beacon light and source of inspiration for the future generations. He rightly understood the maxim of the Tenth Master— Guru Gobind Singh that '*Deg Teg Jag Mein Doy Chaley*' i.e. 'Deg' (symbol of the service to the poor) and 'Teg' (symbol of political power) should go hand in hand. His free kitchen was open for everyone. As a mark of respect to his memory, his two big '*chulhas*'¹—fire-places—are still preserved where the food was cooked. Baba Ala Singh founded several villages to resettle the poor peasants. On account of his religious temperament and service to the poor, he had become a legend during his life time.

Ala Singh was decidedly more than a Sikh Misdar of eighteenth century. His greatest achievement was that he carved out a kingdom in the territory which was close to the centre of mighty Mughal Empire. His fight against Ahmad Shah Abdali was punctuated to his such diplomatic manner that enabled him to survive the severest onslaught of the Afghan invader. He maintained a delicate balance of power with mighty Dal Khalsa in helping in their grim fight against the Abdalis and their inroads towards Delhi and Gangetic Doab. For his people he was more than a ruler or benefactor. He was revered for his religious disposition as also a popular Sikh leader who ushered in an era of peace and tranquility. He put an end to oppressive rule of Mughal Faujdar and saved them from Bhatti desperados. It is because of these reasons that it was considered proper to reinstate this monograph on Maharaja Ala Singh as

Baba Ala Singh, the founder of Patiala Kingdom. In Punjabi parlance, the word Baba abounds within itself all the spiritual and secular virtues that go to make an ideal ruler. Ala Singh was decidedly one such ruler. His legends still linger on in the Patiala city and its surroundings. The book has been revised and upgraded keeping in view the advancement of historical knowledge since its last publication in 1954.

I express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. S.P. Singh, Vice-Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar who took the initiative and persuaded me to revise this book and sanctioned its publication by the University. I am grateful to the authorities of Khalsa College, Amritsar for giving me permission to issue a revised edition. I am thankful to Prof. Prithpal Singh Kapur, former Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar who has given valuable suggestions for the improvement and Sh. B.S. Thaur, a noted journalist who has taken pains to read the text. Last but not least, I am thankful to my wife Smt. Joginder Kaur for loving cooperation. My thanks are also due to S. Jagjit Singh Walia, Director, Press and Publication Deptt., Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar for producing this book with a befitting getup.

Kirpal Singh

1288, Sector-15B
Chandigarh-160015

FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

Sikh History Research Department was started in Khalsa College during the life time of Sir Sardar Sundar Singh Majithia. Ever since its inception, it has been doing commendable work. Now Professor Kirpal Singh M.A., the writer of this book is incharge of this department. He has taken considerable pains in collection of material for this work, which is being published by the Khalsa College, Amritsar.

This book is a well-knit narration of historical events duly supported by facts. The third chapter which describes the condition of the Cis-Sutlej territory in those days, paints a picture of chaos and anarchy then prevailing. This fact established Maharaja Ala Singh's pre-eminence as he was able to uproot the anarchy and give rise to a state which led a peaceful and prosperous existence.

Another chapter worthy of note is entitled "Maharaja Ala Singh's relations with the Marathas." This chapter presents Maharaja Ala Singh's personality as a Sikh as well as a Statesman. As a true Sikh he helped the Marathas in the hour of their dire need. His friendly relations with powers which could be helpful in driving out the foreigners, throw light on him as a statesman of high calibre.

Chapter No. 13 portrays the sagacity with which the Maharaja was able to meet the exigencies of the times. In his dealings with the Mughals, the neighbouring rulers and the Pathan invaders, he effectively guarded the interests of his own country. The writer narrates the events which conclusively prove Maharaja's faithfulness towards the *Dal Khalsa*, his

ambition to establish the Sikh rule and his love of high Sikh ideals.

Maharaja Ala Singh was par-excellent in administrative ability which has been so rare in the rulers of the world. He dealt impartially with all religions, treated all his subjects alike and gave high posts to persons of all denominations purely on merit.

The chapter on Maharaja's character also deserves a mention here. It is remarkable that in those days of moral laxity, his character shines like a beacon light. He was devoted to his only wife, Rani Fateh Kaur, who was also true Sikh. Maharaja never cast an eye on other women. Once while standing on the top of his house unintentionally he saw a young girl bathing, he turned his eyes away and henceforward treated her as his own daughter and gave her in marriage himself.

In accordance with Sikh tradition he ran a *langar* (free kitchen), where his *Rani* personally distributed food to all without distinction of caste and creed.

The book is a source of valuable information corroborated by historical data. Here and there an incident has been repeated but it is in conformity with the context.

Amritsar

Vir Singh

1-11-54

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Baba Ala Singh occupies a unique place in the history of the Sikhs. He was the pioneer leader and founder of one of the most important Sikh States. Almost every book on the rise of Sikh power has devoted some space to Baba Ala Singh but so far neither any account of this great hero has been based on contemporary Marathi and Persian sources nor any detail of his great qualities of statesmanship, administrative capacity and true leadership has been brought about.

While writing the life of Baba Ala Singh, one is confronted with numerous difficulties, which are peculiar to themselves. One of the greatest handicaps is that there is no contemporary detailed account available. The later records *i.e.*, Patiala Records, present only a onesided picture which suffer from serious mistakes of omission and commission. The task of a historian is not merely to present facts collected from the various sources, but to undertake spadework and dig out new sources—contemporary or semi-contemporary—, which might yield the required information. For instance, Patiala Records either omit altogether the arrest of Baba Ala Singh or describe him in alliance with Ali Mohammad Khan, the Rohilla Faujdar of Sirhind. Thus we have to search for necessary information from Rohilla accounts, which describe in detail the activities of Ali Mohammad Khan at Sirhind. The Rohilla accounts, especially *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*,¹ *Gul-i-Rahmat*² and *Ahwal-i-Najib-ud-Daula*³ by Bihari Lal definitely assert that Baba Ala Singh was summoned to Sirhind and arrested there just after the arrival of Ali Mohammad Khan whereas the author of *Tarikh-i-Patiala* and Griffin describe in detail the friendship of Ali

Mohammad Khan and Baba Ala Singh. Similarly for the study of the Baba Ala Singh relations with the Marathas, we have to probe into Marathi newsletters⁴ and for the study of his relations with the Mughal Emperors, we have to trace references from contemporary sources like *Tarikh-i-Alamgir-Sani*⁵ etc. Hence the biography of Baba Ala Singh presents a peculiar set of difficulties and calls for a vast range of research work in different languages.

Of the writings on Baba Ala Singh two deserve special mention. The first is an account written in the *Tarikh-i-Patiala* (Urdu) by Khalifa Mohammad Hussam, Prime Minister of Patiala (1878 A.D.). It is full of distortions and errors. The author has written the account without scrutiny of the original sources⁶ Moreover he tried to isolate the personality of Baba Ala Singh from the rest of the Khalsa, which is like separating the body from the soul. Most activities of Baba Ala Singh were interwoven with the history of the Khalsa. Obviously the Khalifa did not understand the proper significance of the exploits of the founder of the Patiala Kingdom. The second is the biography of Baba Ala Singh by Karam Singh (Panjabi-Gurmukhi). This made a right approach to the subject. The author tried to correct the errors committed by the Khalifa and was successful to a considerable extent. But he could not utilize the Marathi sources, the coins of Baba Ala Singh and the important records in Persian (*Darbare-i-Mualla*, Boundary dispute correspondence, etc.) With good deal of labour and research in various Persian works, he could only establish that Baba Ala Singh helped the Marathas with foodgrains in the battle of Panipat (*vide* Appendix No. 3 of S. Karam Singh's work). But the Marathi newsletters which have been utilized for the first time in the present book establish the following facts:-

1. Sada Shiva Bhau, Commander-in-Chief of the Maratha Army, was anxious to have an alliance with Baba Ala Singh.

2. He deputed Laxman Appaji Ekbote, a Maratha envoy, to the Sirhind territory, who stayed with the Baba.
3. Baba Ala Singh was in correspondence with the Peshwa on the eve of the battle of Panipat.
4. The Baba gave shelter to the Maratha fugitives even after the fateful battle of Panipat.⁷

S. Karam Singh stated only this much that Baba Ala Singh had sent a military force against Jawahar Singh, *Jat* of Bharatpur, when he attacked Delhi in order to wage a war of revenge against Najib-ud-Daula. But recently discovered records describe in detail Baba Ala Singh's relations with Najib. From *Takhas Namah* by Miskin⁸ (British Museum London) we learn that it was Najib who conducted Ala Singh to Ahmad Shah Abadali after the great *Ghallughara*, bloody carnage of the Sikhs by Ahmad Shah Abadali in 1762 A.D. The records of *Darbar-i-Mualla* (Jaipur)⁹ give in detail Baba Ala Singh's relations with Najib-ud-Daula and Zain Khan, the Abdali Governor of Sirhind. It was Baba Ala Singh who brought about a rapprochement between the Sikhs and Najib when the Sikhs crossed the Jamuna after the death of Zain Khan. *Tarikh-i-Alamgir-Sani*, another contemporary source, describes the help rendered by Baba Ala Singh to Alamgir II and his Wazir, Imad, when they visited Hansi Hissar territory in 1758 A.D. The records of the Boundary Dispute correspondence Volume 10,¹⁰ throw a flood of light on Baba Ala Singh's conquests in the modern District of Hissar (Haryana).

History literally means investigation. Every event of Baba's life has been subjected to careful investigation and examination. The best available data have been drawn upon. In presentation, an effort has been made to present the details in a pleasant manner. Events have not been dressed up to make them grander than they factually were or what the old chroniclers had attempted to achieve. Fictional embellishments have also been avoided.

In view of the fresh materials brought to light and of the numerous corrections introduced in the account of the court historians, it has been possible to attempt an unbiased estimate of Baba Ala Singh. The present writer will feel his labours amply rewarded if his work succeeds in illuminating a comparatively dark and obscure corner of Indian history.

I am indebted to Bhai Sahib Dr. Vir Singh, who despite of his ill-health has acceded to my request for writing foreword to this book and also to Rai Bahadur G.S. Sardesai Kamshet, Poona, for his going through the chapter, "Maharaja Ala Singh's Relations with the Marathas." I feel grateful to S.B. Jodh Singh, M.A., M.L.C., (retired principal) who suggested this subject and gave me useful advice and also to Principal Inder Singh, B.Sc. (Agricultural) (Wales), Barrister-at-Law, for his constant encouragement and guidance. I am thankful to Dr. Balbir Singh, Ph.D. (London) Panch Batti, Dehra Dun, Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, Head of History Department, Punjab University, Principal Kirpal Singh Narang M.A. (Hons.) Ramgarhia College, Phagwara, who have gone through the manuscript and gave me valuable suggestions. I am particularly grateful to my learned friend Dr. Mohan Singh, Ph. D., D. Litt., who helped me a lot in bringing out this book. I am thankful to the Rajpramukh Maharaja Adhiraj of P.E.P.S.U., for granting me permission to have photographic copies of the portraits of Baba Ala Singh and his illustrious successors, to Dr. Ganda Singh, Director of Archives, Patiala, to Shri Vidya Sagar Suri, M.A., Keeper of Records, Punjab Government, Shri M.S. Randhawa, I.C.S. ex-Commissioner, Ambala Division, for allowing me to have access to the records lying in their offices ; to Bharata Itihasa Samshodhaka Mandala, Poona, for the translation of some of the Marathi letters and to Public Works Department, P.E.P.S.U., Patiala for preparation of the map indicating the territories of Baba Ala Singh.

References

1. "*Gulistan-i-Rahmat*" is a Persian Manuscript, original lying in Rampur State library (extract copy in Khalsa College, Amritsar). It is the most authentic history of the Rohillas written by Mustajab Ali Khan, son of Hafiz Rahmat Khan. The latter participated in the Rohilla campaigns under Ali Mohammad Khan. It describes in detail Ali Mohammad's activities at Sirhind.
2. *Gul-i-Rahmat* : MS. (Persian) original copy in Rampur State library (extract copy in Khalsa College, Amritsar). It is also a similar account of Rohillas and gives useful information.
3. *Ahwal-i-Najib-ud Daula wa Ali Mohammad Khan wa Doondi Khan* by Munshi Behari Lal son of Badri Das Khan of village Bonse Baraily (1787 A.D.). Persian manuscript preserved in the library of Nawab Salar Jang, Hyderabad, Deccan, copy in Khalsa College, Amritsar.
4. Marathi Newspapers throw a flood of light over Baba Ala Singh's relations with the Marathas. The writer is thankful to Bharata Itihas Samshodhaka Mandala, Poona, for translation of some of the Marathi letters.
5. *Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani* : Translated and abridged by Sir J.N. Sarkar (typed copy in Khalsa College, Amritsar.) It gives information regarding Baba Ala Singh help to Alamgir Sani.
6. Thucydides has rightly stated that "men commonly avail themselves of what they find ready to their hand and accept from one another the current report of past events without putting them to the test of examination, even when they have taken place in their own country."
Thucydides by W. Lucas Collins p. 3.
7. *Selection from Peshwa Daftar* by Rai Bahadur G.S. Sardesai, Volume No. 21, letter No. 116, 197, 69, Volume No. 27, letter No : 109, 133, 218, 220 and 26.
Marathanchya Itihas Sadanen, Rajwade Volume No. 6, letter No. 378, 382 and 465.
8. *Tahmas Nama*, Persian Manuscript, British Museum London, (Photostat copy in Khalsa College, Amritsar). Miskin was the personal attendant of Mir Miran and later on he joined the services of Zain Khan, the Governor of Sirhind. He gives graphic details regarding the rule of Zain Khan. It also describes relationship between Baba Ala Singh and Najib.
9. *Darbar-i-Mualla* Persian Manuscript original in Archives, Jaipur. Stamped and certified copies in Khalsa College, Amritsar. These records are most important and give a lot of information regarding Maharaja's relations with Zain Khan and Najib-ud-Daula.

10. *Boundary Dispute Correspondence Volumes:*

Persian Manuscripts ten volumes. Volume No. 7, 9 and one more have been discovered by the writer. The whole correspondence forms a complete record regarding the fixation of boundary between Patiala State and district Hissar (1803-1856 A.D.), The conquests of Baba Ala Singh in the district Hissar have been described in detail. The originals are lying in the Punjab Record Office, Simla (now Punjab State Archives Patiala). This record has been used for the first time in this volume.

Kirpal Singh

CHRONOLOGY

1691 A.D.	Birth of Baba Ala Singh.
1707 A.D.	Marriage with Fateh Kaur.
1714 A.D.	Death of his father.
1716 A.D.	Avenges the death of his father.
1722 A.D.	Leaves Bhadaur and settles at Barnala.
1727 A.D.	Founds Longowal.
1731 A.D.	Battle of Barnala : defeats the Muslim Confederacy.
1731 A.D.	Takes <i>Pahul</i> .
1745 A.D.	Acquires the territory of his brother Sabha Singh on his death.
1745-46 A.D. ...	Arrested by Ali Mohammad Khan.
1748 A.D.	Escapes from Sunam fort.
1748 A.D.	Honoured with robe of Honour by Prince Ahmad.
1749 A.D.	Conquest of Kakra and foundation of the fort of modern Bhawanigarh.
1752 A.D.	Conquest of Pargana Sansaur.
1753 A.D.	Foundation of Patiala.
1758 A.D.	Invites the Marthas to Cis-Sutlej territory.
1758 A.D.	Helps Emperor Alamgir Sani with food-grains.

1759 A.D.	Battle of Rampura : Annexes many villages of Bhatti territory.
1761 A.D.	Helps the starving Maratha army with foodgrains in the third Battle of Panipat.
1761 A.D.	Afghan Emperor recognised Baba Ala Singh's independence.
1762 A.D.	Bloody carnage of the Sikhs, and arrest of Baba Ala Singh.
1764 A.D.	Fall of Sirhind ; Foundation of the Pucca fort at Patiala.
1765 A.D.	Granted insignia of sovereignty by Ahmad Shah Abdali.
1765 A.D.	Death.



Maharaja Amar Singh



Maharaja Sahib Singh



Maharaja Karam Singh



Maharaja Narinder Singh



Maharaja Mahender Singh



Maharaja Rajinder Singh



Maharaja Bhupinder Singh



Maharaja Yadvindra Singh



Maharaja Amarinder Singh



Kanwar Raninder Singh

THE GURU'S BLESSINGS

*We mistake the gratuitous blessings of heaven
for the fruits of our industry.*

L. Estrange

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Cis-Sutlej territory (the territory between the Jamuna and the Sutlej) was dominated by the Bhatti tribes. The Bhattis¹, Muslim Rajput converts, lived a pastoral and predatory life driving their cattle about in search of new pastures and lifting their neighbours' cattle whenever they got a chance². Sometimes a band of six or ten armed Bhattis would make a dash upon some grazing herd, drive off its armed herdsmen, and carry away the herd by violence. Such a band was called *dhar*, a group of decoits, in the Panjabi dialect of the country. But sometimes a leader of note would organize a larger expedition of two or three hundred men, some of them mounted on ponies, and took them out for a foray, fifty miles or more into the enemy's territory and carry off their cattle and other spoils by sheer force. Such a larger band was called *Katak*. When the attacked roused the country-side and pursued the invaders, the pursuing force was called a *Yark*. The arms consisted of swords, match-locks and short spears, and the characteristic weapon of the country, *Sela*, a heavy spear, sometimes twenty feet long with a heavy iron head of some three or four feet or even more, and with a bamboo handle. The last was wielded by both hands by footmen³. When such a *Katak* used to move out, they killed and plundered whosoever came in their way⁴. It so happened that in one of the forays against a *Katak*, Mohan and his son, Roopa, were killed. Roopa left behind

two young children, Sandli and Phul, who thereafter alongwith their mother lived with Kala, their uncle¹. Kala too had fought valiantly but he could just save his life. He was, however, robbed of everything he possessed. Now he had to support his own family as well as the family of his deceased brother. He began to wander in search of food and shelter.

In those turbulent times tribal affinity determined the complexion of settlements. Persons of the same tribe inhabited the entire village, and sometimes several villages in the same area belonged to one and the same tribe². A vital factor favouring human habitation in the dry and desert areas was the supply of water. Wherever there was a well or a pond there arose a village. The paucity of water was the cause of many frictions and conflicts. The village in possession of a well or a pond was naturally deemed richer and its inhabitants were considered luckier and wealthier.

Once a rich man travelled through the territory near modern Rampura Phul. This area was notorious for the scarcity of wells. The rich traveller decided that he would dig a well if he was blessed with a son. It so happened that his desire was fulfilled and so he sank a well there. Around that well there developed a village named Mari Siddh Qalandar (three miles from Rampura Phul railway station, Bhatinda-Dhuri line). The village came to be inhabited by the Bhullar³ by the middle of the 17th century A.D.

Kala and his kinsmen were leading a nomadic life. They shifted from place to place and could find shelter nowhere. After wandering for days and nights in search of food they reached Mari Siddh Qalandar and decided to settle there.⁴

Tribal animosity waged supreme. The Bhullars of the village would not allow the newcomers, Sidhus⁵ to live in that village. They were harassed in every possible way. When the womenfolk of Kala went to draw water from the well, they

were insulted. As Kala was keen on settling there, he, according to the custom of the times, offered one Sidhu girl to some Bhullar in order to effect a blood relationship. But the offer was rejected. Now he did not know what to do. His enemies were too strong for him.¹⁰

There appeared, however, a gleam of hope for Kala when he heard of the arrival of Guru Hargobind, the sixth Sikh Guru (1595-1644 A.D.) at Guruser, a few miles from that place.¹¹ The Guru, after his battle against the Imperial troops had retired to the Cis-Sutlej territory in 1631 A.D. Kala carried his tale of woes and miseries to the Guru. While touching the feet of the Guru he burst into tears and told him in detail the treatment meted out to him and his family. It was just coincidence that Lala Kaura, a prominent Bhullar of the village, had also come to pay his homage to the Guru. The Guru persuaded him to accommodate Kala. The Guru said, "Kala is very poor. You should give him land for five ploughs so that he may make a living." "We are the servants of the Guru", replied Lala politely; and at the same time overwhelmed by a clannish consideration, he remarked, "But we can give no concession to the Sidhus." After having said this, Lala left the place. This was a great blow to Kala's hopes. Now the Guru advised Kala to leave the village of the Bhullars and settle at any place which he happened to reach by sunset. Kala being a man of faith resumed his journey¹².

The sun had set. The golden rays were falling on the glittering surface of a pond. It provided a streak of hope to the weary travellers in that desert. The sight of the pond and the sunset lit up the dark recesses in the heart of Kala and gladdened the hearts of his kinsmen. All decided to make it their home.

"Misfortunes never come alone" says the old adage. Kala was confronted with another set of difficulties. The territory,

where he had encamped, belonged to a very powerful man of the area named Jaitprana (of village Bhokhari). He would not tolerate any new settlement. He came forth to measure strength with the newcomers and to turn them out bag and baggage. Terrified as Kala was to learn the power his rival was famed to possess, he did not give way to despair. He had implicit faith in the Guru. He invoked his help and came out to decide the issue with Jaitprana by force of arms. For the time being the contest appeared equal. But the tables were soon turned. Kala struck a severe blow, which hurled his enemy to the ground. Jaitprana expired¹³.

The defeat and death of this powerful man of the locality at the hands of Kala proved a turning point in his life. It established his reputation as a warrior. He permanently settled at that place and founded a village which was named after the name of his forefather Mehraj. This, however, did not solve the difficulties of Kala and his dependents.

Once again Kala alongwith his young nephews, Sandli and Phul, visited the Guru at Gurusar. According to tradition the youngsters were instructed to rub their bellies before the Guru. The Guru curiously asked why the children behaved in that strange manner. He was told that it indicated their hunger. The younger one excited most pity, and the Guru asked him his name. Hearing the word, the Guru is said to have remarked, "The Phul (Flower) will blossom. What to talk of his hunger, his descendants would satisfy the hunger of millions. Their horses would drink water from the Sutlej and the Jamuna"¹⁴. When Kala came home and told what the Guru had said about the future greatness of Phul and his descendants, his wife rebuked him saying that his brother's sons would become rulers but what about his own sons. Kala was a man of faith and conviction. Once again he went to the Guru with his own sons, who had received the same instructions to rub their bellies

before the Guru. This time the Guru smiled and said, "They would not be the rulers but would depend upon none and earn their livelihood by dint of their own prowess¹⁵.

Phul, the great ancestor of the Phulkian House of Patiala, Nabha and Jind, was the son of Roop Chand and his wife Ambhi. He was born in 1627 A.D.¹⁶ Trained in the school of adversity, he grew to be a hardy and pushing youngman.

Phul was religiously inclined and liked the company of the holy men. According to traditions preserved in the Patiala records, one Sumerpuri *faqir* happened to visit the place. Phul used to serve him with milk. One day it so happened that he went to the *faqir* with milk but the latter had fallen in a trance. He had to wait for a long time. Night fell and it also began to rain, and he shielded the holy person from rain with his *chaddar*. In this way the whole night passed. At daybreak, when the holy person awoke from his trance, he was much pleased with Phul and taught him the art of feigning death by stopping his breath. The *faqir* also blessed Phul that if he founded a village after his own name, he would be very prosperous¹⁷.

After this incident Phul remained at Mehraj for some time and there he met one Bahbal Gill to whom he disclosed his intention of founding a village. Bahbal, owing to his family bickerings, had shifted to Mehraj from his own village somewhere near Lahore and was on the lookout for a suitable place of residence. He welcomed the idea and went to Rai Bukhtiar of Kangar with whom he had some acquaintance and after presenting him one camel got a *patta* (lease) of Kamanwala *Theh*¹⁸ as the place was called in those days, in favour of Phul, and the village Phul was founded on the site.¹⁹

Phul had to struggle hard to keep himself in possession of this new village, which was named after him. The exact

nature of his struggle against his powerful neighbours is difficult to determine except that they became jealous of his growing strength and popularity. Once Isa Khan²⁰, one of the most powerful neighbours, sent a small force which ousted Phul from his village and appointed Moola Jat as his representative there. But soon after Phul recovered the possession of his village.²¹

The death of Phul occurred under mysterious circumstance. Once he was called to Sirhind and put under confinement. He practised the art of feigning death by holding his breath. His warders taking him dead, handed over his body to his servant, Gidia Mirasi, who had accompanied Phul to Sirhind. The Mirasi taking the body started towards his village. The news of this incident was conveyed to Tiloka and Rama, the sons of Phul at village Dhilwan, where they were living with their mother Bali²². On hearing the death of their father they set out for Sirhind. On the way they met the Mirasi at village Duk Bahadur and taking him to be dead set fire to the body of Phul²³. Thus ended the life of the great ancestor of Phulkian Houses, the grand father of Ala Singh. Phul died in 1689 A.D.²⁴ (January 28, 1689).

The death of Phul greatly alarmed his younger wife Rajji. Taking her sons she went to her brother-in-law, (sister's husband) Sukhanand Brar, who took her to her parental village Sidhana²⁵. Her sons, Jhandu, Takhtmal and Channu, also accompanied their mother. Subsequently they founded a village, Gurnati, near Sidhana, and settled there. Their descendants formed the minor Phulkian House and were called *Laudgarhtas*, i.e., descendants of the younger wife.²⁶

By his elder wife, Phul had three sons, Tiloka, Rama and Raghu, and one daughter Fateh Kaur, alias Fatto. She was married to Dhanna Singh of village Ramdas (District Amritsar) in the family of Baba Buddha. After the death of her husband

she, alongwith her children, shifted to village Phul. Her sons with help of Tiloka, her brother, founded a village Beela, ten miles from Bhadaur and settled there.²⁷

Raghu²⁸ the third son of Phul, was married in the house of Mulkher Bhullar at village Jeondi. After his death, his wife alongwith her children went to her parental house at village Jeondi. The descendants of Raghu are still residing there. According to Griffin, the family formed another minor Phulkian House.²⁹

Tiloka, the eldest son of Phul, was married to Bakhto of village Roreke (near Dhanoula) and had two sons Gurdit Singh and Sukhchain Singh.³⁰ The rulers of Nabha were scions of Gurdit Singh, the elder son of Tiloka, and the chiefs of Jind, Badrukhan and Depalpur descended from Sukhchain Singh, the younger son of Tiloka. The latter two houses are considered the minor Phulkian Houses.³¹

Tiloka and Rama, sons of Phul, both served Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and last Guru of the Sikhs, (1666-1708 A.D.) and had very cordial relations with him. Guru Gobind Singh is said to have sent them the following Hukamnama:-

*"There is one God. The Guru is true. It is the order of the Guru, Bhai Tiloka and Bhai Rama, the Guru will protect all. You should come with your contingent. I am much pleased with you. Your house is mine. On seeing this letter you should at once come in my presence. Your house is mine. You should come to me immediately on seeing this letter. Come with horsemen. Do come, You are my favoured ones. Come you must. I have sent one robe (of honour). Keep it there. Bhado 2, Sambat 53."*³²

When Guru Gobind Singh visited Talwandi Sabo they again went to see him with provisions.³³ Laddha, the youngest son of Rama, took *Pahul* on that occasion and he was renamed Ram Singh.³⁴

Tiloka and Rama also helped Banda Bahadur in response to his call on the eve of the conquest of Sirhind. Tiloka and Rama sent a small contingent of men to fight on their behalf.³⁵

Tiloka and Rama could not pull together for long as Tiloka was a submissive type of persona whereas Rama was bold and adventurous. Rama was successful in getting the collectorship of the neighbouring villages in alliance with Chain Singh, his cousin (from the line of Sema)³⁶ However, they could not continue to live together for long. Rama killed Chain Singh and relieved him of the collection which he was going to deposit. Consequently to avenge the death of their father, Bira, Kamala and Ugarsen killed Rama, the father of Ala Singh.³⁷

Rama was married to Sabi, the daughter of Nano Singh of village Khonse³⁸ and he had six sons:

1. Dunna Singh.
2. Sabha Singh.
3. Ala Singh.
4. Bakhta Singh
5. Buddha Singh
6. Laddha Singh

Dunna Singh is the founder of Bhadaur and Kot Dunna Chieftainship.³⁹ Bakhta, like his brother Ala Singh, left Bhadaur and in alliance with Sabha Singh founded a village near Bhadaur. Later on Bakhta's son, Man Singh, conquered Malaud from the Afghans of Maler Kotla. Bakhta is considered the founder of the minor Phulkian House of Malaud.⁴⁰

Buddha Singh was killed in a battle against the Brars, four miles from Bhadaur, where two pipal trees still stand to commemorate the event. He died childless⁴¹. The youngest son of Rama was Laddha Singh, who took *Pahul* and was renamed Ram Singh.⁴² Ram Singh was married to Sukhan. She gave

birth to a son, Sirja Singh. The child died during the lifetime of his father, who also died young, leaving behind no other issue.⁴³

Sabha Singh was the second son of Rama. He was courageous and daring, and had acquired his possessions by dint of his own efforts. His only son Jodha Singh died during the lifetime of Sabha Singh. Jodha Singh died issueless. His widow joined in wedlock with Sardul Singh, the son of Ala Singh, who ultimately acquired the possessions of Sabha Singh.⁴⁴

Of all the brothers, however, it was Ala Singh who made the greatest contribution to the rise of his dynasty and added lustre to the name of his ancestors. His early life is given in the following pages.

References

1. The Bhattis were the descendants of Bhatt Rao, one of the ancestors of the rulers of Jaisalmer. In course of time they had embraced Islam, and had become sworn enemies of the non-Muslims. Owing perhaps to similar habits all the Rajput clans converted to Islam in that area (Bhattiana—Distt. Hissar and some portion of Bikaner State) began to be called Bhattis in the 18th Century. Bhatti came to mean all Rajput Converts from Jorjyas, Thambee and Chibrali.
2. *Sirsa Settlement Report*, p. 29.
3. ਸੰਤਕ ਬਹਿਯੋ ਭਟੀਆ ਅਪੋ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਜੁਲਮ।
ਗਹਿ ਮੈ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਨੈ ਕਰੋ ਚੋਲਾ ਪਾਏ ਆਮ।
Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand MS. Gurmukhi, p. 5.
4. *Hissar district Gazetteer*, p. 25.
5. *Sirsa Settlement Report*, p. 31.
6. ਭਟਕ ਕੇ ਅਪੋ ਚੋਲੀ ਲਵੈ। ਜਲ ਮਲ ਤੇ ਜੋਈ ਜੁਟਾਵੈ।
Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand (Gurmukhi), p. 74.
7. *Dinakira-i-Mahrajian wa Phulkian*.
8. *Rohatk Gazetteer*, p. 17.
9. Bhattians are said to have sprung from Bhula Mahadeo the matted hair (Sic.) According to Ibbetson they assert that Malwa was their original home. *Punjab Carter*, p. 119.

8. *Tarikh-i-Mukatsar wa Mamdot*, p. 292.
9. Siddhus were the descendants of Sidhu, son of Khot. They link their ancestry with the Rajputs clan of Jaisalmir. According to Ibbetson the distinction between Rajput and Jat was social and not ethnical. Those who were very rich and took leading part in politics began to be called Rajputs, while those who took to cultivation began to be called Jats. *Punjab Castes and Tribes*, p. 100. For detailed account see Appendix Early Ancestors.
10. Bhullera are said to have been driven by the Sidhus from Mari in district Ferozepur.
Punjab States Gazetteer, p. 64.
11. *Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature*, (Mahan Kosh), Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha
Guru Hargobind was the first Sikh Guru, who visited Cis Sutlej territory in the first half of the 17th Century. All Patiala records confirm this view. For details see Appendix Early Ancestors.
12. *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, Ras tenth.
13. *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, Ras tenth.
14. *Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran*, p. 26. *Guru Partap Suraj Granth*, Ras X.
15. *Raj Khalsa*, Giani Gian Singh, p. 6.
16. *Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature (Punjabi)*.
17. *Tarikh-i-Bute Shah MS.*, Persian, p. 295.
18. Kamanwala Theh was the old name of the present site of the village Phul.
19. *Risala-i-Rajju Singh*, MS. in Persian. It is a small booklet of a few pages in possession of Director of Archives, Patiala Pepsu.
20. For more information about Isa Khan see Chapter III.
21. *Tarikh-i-Patiala & Jind*, a small MS. (Persian) in possession of Director of Archives, Patiala; *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 34.
22. Owing perhaps to Phul's intense love with his younger wife, his elder wife Bali and her children were not cared. They had to face many difficulties. Consequently Jassa, the father of Bali came and took away his daughter and her children, Tiloka and Rama to his village, Dhillwan. They lived there upto the death of Phul.
Risala-i-Rajju Singh.
The second wife of Phul was Rajji who was the daughter of Sidhana as author of *Phul Bans Parkash* writes:-
ਭੁਭੀ ਮਹਲ ਰਜੀ ਤਾਰਿਨਾਮ। ਸਧਨਾ ਕੀ ਸੁਰ ਫਿਰਾਮ।
23. *Tazkira-i-Khandan-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian* MS. (Persian). *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 36.

24. ਸਭਾ ਜੋ ਪੰਡਾਲੀ ਜੋ ਸੰਮਤ ਸਿਧਕਮ ਰਾਇ।
ਮਾਘ ਭਈ ਰਿਖਿ ਚੁੰਦਰੀ ਫਿਹ ਰਿਖਿ ਭੁਲ ਸਮਾਇ।
Phul Bens Parkash, MS. (Gurmukhi), p. 25.
Tarikh-i-Patiala, p. 36.
25. *Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran*, MS., p. 27.
26. *The Rajas of the Panjab*, p. 7.
27. *Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran*, MS., p. 27.
28. According to Karam Singh, Raghu was the eldest son of Phul, but this finds no confirmation from other records.
29. *Rajas of the Panjab*, p. 305.
30. *Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran*, MS. p. 43.
31. *Rajas of the Panjab*, pp. 302 and 307.
32. Griffin states that Tiloka died in 1667 A.D. which is not correct because this Hukamnamah is dated 1753 B.K. corresponding to 1696 A.D. and it has been addressed to Tiloka and Rama both.
33. *Travels of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh* (MS Gurmukhi) Sikh History Research Department, Khalsa College, Amritsar, p. 61. Now it has been published under the title "ਸਾਖੀ ਪੋਥੀ"
34. *Akhal-i-Khandan-i-Phul* MS. (Persian)
35. ਰਾਮਾ ਰਿਲੋਕਾ ਅਪ ਨ ਆਏ। ਦੇ ਦੇ ਖਰਚ ਉਨ ਭੇਜੇ ਪਰਾਏ।
Prachin Panth Parkash, Rattan Singh, p. 75.
36. Sema was the son of Mohan and brother of Roop Chand, the father of Phul.
37. *Tarikh-i-Patiala, Rajas of the Panjab*, p. 13.
38. *Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran*, p. 45.
39. *The Rajas of the Panjab*, p. 307.
40. *Rajas of the Panjab*, p. 300.
Ludhiana Gazetteer (1888-89), pp. 107-108.
41. *Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran* MS., pp. 84-85.
42. *Tazaktra-i-Khandan-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian* MS.
Kafiat-i-Phulkian. MS.
43. *Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran*, MS., p. 84-85.
44. *Yadashu Mana Singh Grewal* (MS Persian).
Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran MS., p. 67.

EARLY LIFE AND MARRIAGE

1691 A.D. to 1722 A.D.

A man never has good luck who has a bad wife.

Beecher

Rama, the father of Ala Singh possessed very impressive figure. Once he was riding on the horseback along with his elder brother. He was in the front while his brother, Tiloka, was sitting behind him. A villager passed and remarked that sitting in front was a good omen and Rama would never remain behind.¹ His remark came out true. Rama proved to be the more daring and courageous as compared to his elder brother.

Once a gang of marauders was passing through the village Phul. Rama with his companions fell upon them and relieved of their plunder.² Encouraged by this exploit he founded a village, named Dhabali, and asked his wife's relatives to settle there.³ Later on, he occupied the village Bhadaur⁴ but he could not retain it for long as his distant cousins, the line of Sema, dispossessed him and he had to shift to the site of the present village, Rampura, which he founded after his own name.⁵

Rama was blessed with a third son in 1691. The boy was named Ala, as this name was popular in those days⁶. The Patiala records, especially *Tazakira-i-Khandan-i-Rajaha-i-Phuikian* and *Tarikh-i-Patiala* maintain that Ala Singh was born in Sambat 1752, i.e., 1695 A.D. and at the same time, they hold that he was twenty three when his father died. Later writers like Griffin and Mohammad Latif also quote the same

date. But it is admitted on all hands that Rama was killed in 1714 A.D. Evidently the two views are contradictory. Either Ala Singh was not born in 1695 A.D. or he could not be twenty-three at the time of the death of his father. He himself was the third son and had three younger brothers, Bakhia, Buddha and Laddha. Laddha, his youngest brother, took Pahul and was renamed Ram Singh when Guru Gobind Singh visited Talwandi in 1704 A.D. If we presume 1695 A.D. to be the year of the birth of Ala Singh, Laddha, his youngest brother, would not have been more than five years old at the time of his taking Pahul, which is highly improbable. Hence Ala Singh was born in 1691 A.D. and was twentythree when his father died in 1714 A.D.

Like Akbar the Great, Ala Singh had no⁶ schooling. But according to the standards prevalent he appears to have learnt the art of fighting and the use of war weapons current in those days. This training coupled with sharp intellect, physical strength, daring and courage, proved a great asset in his career.

At the age of sixteen, Ala Singh was married to Fateh Kaur⁷ a daughter of Khanan of village Kaleke (near Dhanoula)⁸ About Fateh Kaur's early life, the following account is available from various sources. In 1698 Bhai Dyal Das, who belonged to the famous line of Bhai Bhagtu⁹ paid a visit to village Kaleke. He was there when a daughter was born in the house of Khanan. At the birth of the female issue the family was greatly dejected and the baby girl was buried alive. Perhaps to wash off this sin, Khanan invited Bhai Dyal Das to dinner as he was very much revered as a holy person. The Bhai knew the birth of the girl and the ghastly act of their having buried her alive. He, therefore, refused the invitation. Khanan persistently asked the reasons for the refusal. The holy person explained to him that he did not dine in a house where female infanticide was practised.¹⁰ Khanan was stunned to hear this

and offered his apologies. The girl was quickly unearthed and fortunately she was found still to have some life in her. It was a matter of great relief to Bhai Dyal Dass, who agreed to have his meals at Khanan's house and instructed them to bring up the girl very carefully and told them that she was going to be a great woman. The girl was named Fatto and she was married to Ala Singh at the age of nine.¹¹

Fatch Kaur proved to be a lady of sterling ability and helped her husband in administrative and political affairs. She was also a faithful wife and stood by Ala Singh through thick and thin. She was a devoted housewife and served the Sikhs in the *Langar* (common kitchen.)

Just as Napoleon had benefitted by his marriage with Josephine, similarly Ala Singh substantially benefitted by his marriage with Fateh Kaur. She brought him into friendly relations with the famous family of Bhai Dyal Das. She had an implicit faith in the spiritual powers of the Bhai family. Whenever there occurred any difficulty she used to bring her husband at village Bhuchuke, where the Bhai family resided¹² Bhai Dyal Das had a son, Bhai Gurbaksh Singh, who was a very fine soldier and helped Ala Singh a lot in the founding of Patiala Kingdom. Later on Bhai Gurbaksh Singh himself founded the Kaithal State.

Ala Singh's marriage gave him another good contact. Gurbaksh Singh Kaleke, a cousin of Fateh Kaur, greatly helped Ala Singh in founding Patiala, the capital of erstwhile Patiala State.

Rama, the father of Ala Singh, had been killed by the sons of Chain Singh. To avenge the death of their father was considered the most important task. No sooner did Ala Singh and his brother Sabha Singh received the information that Bira, Kamala and Ugarsen, the sons of Chain Singh had gone to the village Gumati, than they rushed to the place with a band of armed men. In the scuffle Ala Singh got a wound in his

forehead but he was successful in the expedition. Bira and Kamala were killed. Ugarsen ran for safety to village Sema (near Mehraj), which too was plundered, and the family of Sema was turned out of Mehraj.¹³

With the death of Rama, the matter of the division of common villages came to the fore. Tiloka¹⁴ was requested for division of the property. But Tiloka, in order to hush up the matter, invited the descendants of Sema to settle at Phul. This measure had the desired effect and it scared away the sons of Rama from the village Phul.¹⁴ Sabha Singh, the second son of Rama, went to Dhabali and settled there. Dunna Singh, Ala Singh and Bakhta went to Bhadaur, which had been deserted by the line of Sema and settled there¹⁵.

It was in those days that Bhai Mool Chand¹⁶ who is considered the patron saint of Patiala House, visited Bhadaur to meet Bhai Charan Dass¹⁷, a well known saint of the locality. When Ala Singh and his brothers heard about it, they went to see him. Perhaps impressed by the manly deportment of Ala Singh, Bhai Charan Das remarked that one of the sons of Rama would achieve the status of a Raja. Ala Singh was quick to note, and at once requested the holy man to name the person who was going to be the Raja so that rest of the brothers might undertake to obey him. The holy person kept silent. Ala Singh again put the same question but received no answer. The request was repeated for the third time when the holy man sharply replied that the person who was asking the name would be the Raja¹⁸. This remark had a wholesome effect on Ala Singh and it strengthened his determination and encouraged him to carve out a principality.

Ala Singh was not satisfied with his life at Bhadaur owing to the dominating influence of Dunna Singh¹⁹ his eldest brother. He was, therefore, on the lookout for an opportunity to leave Bhadaur. The opportunity came when there occurred

a famine. The revenue due from Dunna Singh could not be realized. He was imprisoned, along with this son Dau Singh, who died in prison.²⁰ Ala Singh saved himself from financial liabilities by leaving Bhadaur and shifting to Barnala, fifteen miles from Bhadaur. This significant event occurred in 1722 A.D.²¹ This change proved to be a blessing in disguise. The new environments favourably reacted upon his career. The political situation of the time also greatly facilitated his rise to power.

References

1. *Risala-i-Rajju Singh*.
2. *Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand*, Gurmukhi, MS., Motibagh Library, p. 93
3. *Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran*, p. 45.
- Village Bhadaur was founded by Bhaddar Sen and was in ruins prior to the occupation of Rama.
5. Rampura is situated at the distance of three miles from village Phul and is a railway station on Bhatinda-Dhru line.
Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran, p. 45.
6. Ala was a popular name because of two Rajput heroes Ala and Uddal. A Var (Ode) was also composed which became popular after the names of these Rajput heroes.
Phlat's Hindustani Dictionary.
7. Her family name was Pato.
8. The Kaleke Sardars belong to Sarac got. They trace their descent from Bhatti Rajputs of Jaisalmir and name after their ancestor Chowdhary Kala who founded the village Kalyanwali near Sirsa; his grandson Maluke founded Kaleke where his son Khanan lived. His descendants still hold land there.
Panjab States Gazetteer Vol. XVII, p. 63.
9. Bhagtu was from the line of Dhar or Warh son of Siddhu. Dhar settled at Bhatinda and from his line Bhagtu was the disciple of Guru Arjan Dev, who conferred upon Bhagtu the title of Bhai.
Kaflat-i-Bhaikian MS. (Persian)
Chiefs and Families of Note by Griffin (1890), p. 182

10. Sikhism has done a good deal of service of humanity by uprooting this malpractice. Guru Gobind Singh especially instructed the Sikhs not to mix up with a person who practices female infanticide (*Kurhiar*).
11. *Pattala Gharane-dian-Surbir Biblan*, p. 3.
12. *Katfat-i-Bhai Khan (Persian) MS.*
13. *The Rajas of the Punjab*, p. 15. *Tarikh-i-Pattala*, p. 39.
14. *Risala-i-Rajju Singh MS. (Persian)*
15. *Ibid.*
16. Bhai Mool Chand surnamed *Baggi Badiwala* (white locked), was born at Bhatinda with a lock of white hair. He served Baba Ganga Ram of Bhatinda. Soon after, Bhai Mool Chand became famous as a pious Sikh in whole of area and was respected for his religious character. Later on, he shifted from Bhatinda and settled at Sunam.
Panjab States Gazetteer, Vol XVII. p. 78.
For detailed account of Bhai Mool Chand see *Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand (MS)* There are so many *Sakhis* in *Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand (MS)* which narrate Bhai Mool Chand's blessings on Ala Singh and his father, Rama.
17. Like Baba Ajit Singh, Charan Das was also the adopted son of Mata Sundri ji. After the death of Baba Ajit Singh, he came to Bhadaur and settled there.
Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature (Mahan Kosh, Bhai Kahn Singh).
18. *Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand MS.* p. 101.
19. *Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand MS.* p. 101. The following lines describe the life of Ala Singh at Bhadaur:-
ਭਾਈ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਰੀਯ ਅਸਥੀ: ਸਿਰ ਪਰ ਨੁਸਖ ਕਰੇ ਚੁੰਨ ਲਖੀ।
20. *Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran MS.* p. 65.
21. *Tarikh-i-Pattala*, p. 40.

POLITICAL SCENARIO

*A great man is made up of qualities that meet
or make great occasions*

Lowell

Prior to the rise of Ala Singh, the Cis-Sutlej territory was dominated by the most powerful man of the period, Isa Khan¹. Phul, Rampura and Bhadaur, the ancestral villages of Ala Singh, lay in his jurisdiction. In 1712 Isa Khan helped Jahandar Shah, the Mughal Emperor, in his war of succession. When his patron ascended the throne of Delhi, he conferred upon him *Panj Hazari Mansab* and the *Faujdar* of Lakhi Jungle. In addition to this he was appointed as the *Faujdar* of Jalandhar Doab. He exercised his power and prestige in such a way that he began to be considered as a rival of the royal princes². The power he possessed and the terror he struck in the hearts of the people of the area have been very aptly described by the author of *Muasar-ul Umara*: "Through fear of him the tiger used to draw its claws back. Nobody could dare to interfere with his possessions³."

At the time of the death of Rama in 1714 A.D. Isa Khan's power was at its zenith and he continued to maintain his position upto 1718 A.D. Taking advantage of the rise of Banda Singh Bahadur, Isa Khan began to fish in the troubled waters and lay his hands upon the caravans passing between Delhi and Kabul. The imperial officers who had been assigned *jagirs* in his region could get nothing from their villages, because all revenue was forcibly collected by him⁴, and the *Faujdar*s of Sirhind could do nothing. He considered Abdul Samad Khan, the Governor of Lahore, as his rival and he

tried to get the *Subedari* of Lahore through the efforts of Khan Dauran. But the influence of Mohammad Amin Khan ultimately prevailed in favour of Abdul Samad Khan⁴. Soon after there occurred a turn in the tide. After the persecution of Banda Bahadur, Abdul Samad Khan decided to suppress Isa Khan. Shahdad Khan of Kasur was sent with a force to chastise him⁵.

Shahdad Khan in his punitive expedition was assisted by the Brars⁷. Isa Khan had killed Kapura⁸ Brar, one of the ancestors of the Rajas of Faridkot State. The Brars were on the lookout to avenge the death of their leader. They, therefore, joined hands with Shahdad Khan against their common enemy.⁹

The allied forces marched towards Thara, the seat of Isa Khan who fought very bravely. But soon he was over powered and killed in the battle in 1718 A.D.¹⁰

The death of Isa Khan is the most important event in the evolution of Phulkian States and a great landmark in the career of Ala Singh. Isa Khan was the main obstacle in the way of the rise of Ala Singh. He had already hindered the growth of the power of Phul, who had to leave his village Phul for some time¹¹. It was on account of Isa Khan's fear that Tiloka and Rama, the sons of Phul could not join Banda Bahadur personally and had to content themselves by sending a contingent to fight on their behalf¹².

Though the death of Isa Khan had removed the major obstacle from the way of Ala Singh, yet he had to face many difficulties. His territory was surrounded by powerful neighbours. In the east was Sirhind¹³, the most important military station between Delhi and Lahore. Before Ala Singh's rise to power Sirhind was under weak hands. Ibrahim-ud-din Khan, the Faujdar of Sirhind, was the most bloodthirsty, cruel and wicked person, who had ever held the military post of Sirhind¹⁴. In 1717 A.D. he abused one of his retainers, who

could not tolerate this and killed him. Ibrahim-ud-din Khan was succeeded by Zain-ud-din Ahmad, who had already been the *Faujdar* of Sirhind¹⁵. According to the prevalent accounts Ala Singh first came in contact with the *Faujdar* of Sirhind when he was imprisoned by Ali Mohammad Khan. Later he measured his strength with Abdul Samad Khan, Ahmad Shah Abdali's *Faujdar*, whom he defeated in 1758 A.D.¹⁶.

In the north of Ala Singh's territory was Rai Kot¹⁷. Rai Kalha of Rai Kot wielded great influence in the locality¹⁸. Ala Singh defeated him in the battle of Barnala in 1731 A.D.

The Afghans of Maler Kotla¹⁹ constituted another menace to the rising power of Ala Singh. He had to fight against Jamal Khan and Bhikhan Khan, the powerful rulers of Maler Kotla. Man Singh, the nephew of Ala Singh (Bakhta's son), conquered Malaud territory from the Afghans of Maler Kotla²⁰. Jamal Khan was defeated by Ala Singh in the battle of Barnala in 1731 A.D.²¹ and Bhikhan Khan was killed by Himmat Singh, the grandson of Ala Singh²².

In the west were the stout Brars, who were well-known for their ferocious character²³. The Brars belonged to the same tribe, to which Ala Singh belonged. They were the descendants of the common ancestor Siddhu. The Brars had occupied the territory near Faridkot and used to carry on depredations upto the territory of Sunam and Rai Kot²⁴. Ala Singh wisely did not start open hostilities with the Brars, his own kinsmen except once when Jodha of Bhatinda was defeated by the combined forces of Ala Singh and Dal Khalsa²⁵.

In the south of Ala Singh's possessions were the Bhattis. The Bhattis proved to be the most powerful enemies of the House of Patiala. Ala Singh and his grandson, Amar Singh had to wage a life-long war against them. At the time of the rise of Ala Singh the Bhattis were pastoral, fierce and restless in their habits, and defiant of any control²⁶. They were little

more than a band of robbers; but their boldness and rapidity of movement and the wild nature of their country saved them from being crushed²⁷. They lived for the most part in open villages or wandered with their flocks in search of pastures. A few towns or fortified villages were scattered through the waste land which the Bhatti tribe made their resort at the approach of danger. These were Fatehabad, Sirsa, Rania and Abohar²⁸. Their country after the name of their tribe was called Bhattiana²⁹, which was surrounded by erstwhile Bahawalpur State on one side erstwhile and Bikaner State on the other.

At the time of Timur's invasion, the Bhattis were undergoing the process of conversion to Islam. The ruler of Bhatner at that time was Dul Chand while his brother was Kamal-ud-din³⁰. This process of conversion to Islam was almost complete by the time of Ala Singh. Ever since their conversion to Islam, the Bhattis, with the zeal of new converts, had become the sworn enemies of the non-Muslims. Ala Singh could not crush them single-handed. For his conquests of Bhatti territory, Ala Singh always waited for the arrival of the *Dal Khalsa*.

It will not be out of place to mention here the importance of the *Dal Khalsa*. The *Dal Khalsa* proved to be the most important force of the time. They used to exact tributes from the territory occupied by various Cis-Sutlej chiefs. They sacked Sirhind not less than four times during the lifetime of Ala Singh. Ala Singh identified himself with the *Dal Khalsa* by taking *Pahul* and most of the victories of Ala Singh synchronized with the arrival of the *Dal Khalsa* in his territory.

References

1. One of the ancestors of Isa Khan got a Jagir consisting of the Tappa of Shadiwal from Emperor Akbar (Ferozepur Dist. Gazetteer). In 1700 A.D. Isa Khan founded Kot Isa Khan. Joining Bahadur Shah before the battle of Jaju he was enrolled as *Mansabdar*.

Fall of Mughal Empire Vol. 1, p. 188.

2. One of the contemporaries of Isa Khan writes :-

از سبب این مورد دولت عظیم و دستگیر تلمیذات و اب قبل چشم
و بطن و علم گشت آن قدر مکت و دستگیر حاصل نمود که در عمارت و مثال
موم و ارباب مقابل با و شاهزاده با خیال می کردند

Ibrat Namah by Mirza Mohammad MS. (Persian), p. 83.

3. *Muzar-ul-Umara*, Vol. II, p. 825.
4. *Muntakhib-ul-Lubab*, Khafi Khan, Vol. II, pp. 767-68.
5. *Ibrat Namah* by Mirza Mohammad, p. 83.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 84
7. The Brars were the descendants of Brar, who belonged to the line of Siddhus. Brar had two sons, Dul and Pajr. The former was the ancestor of the *Rajas* of the Faridkot and the latter was the ancestor of the *Rajas* of Patiala, Nabha and Jind. The Brars were very powerful in the areas of modern district Ferozepur and Faridkot State. They were famous for their warlike habits as the proverb of Ferozepur district *Barchhi Brar di* indicates.
8. Kapura was one of the most prominent Brars who had established himself in the territory of Kot Kapura, which he had himself founded after his own name. Originally he belonged to the village Panjgarain and owned eighty one villages.

Tarikh-i-Pargana Muktsar and Mandot by Syed Nisar Ali.

9. *Ala-i-Brar Bans*, Vol. III, p. 222.
10. *Fall of Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, p. 189.
Muntakhib-ul-Lubab, Vol. II, p. 767.
Muzar-ul-Umara, p. 825.
11. *Tuzk-i-Khandan-i-Rajaka-Puhtian*.
12. *Prakash Parash Parash*, Rattan Singh, p. 75.
13. According to the author of *Ala-i-Brar Bans*, Sahir Rao, 16th descent from Lord Krishna, ruled at Lahore, and tradition assigns the foundation of Sirhind to him. The author of *Hadizat-ul-Aqalim* states that Sirhind was cut off from Samur by Sultan Feroze Shah. He built a fort there and made the place headquarters of the Sarkar. According to Sir J.N. Sarkar Sirhind mostly flourished during the Mughal period.
14. *Ibrat Namah* by Mirza Mohammad Hareli, p. 122.
15. *Ibid.*

16. *Tarikh-i-Patala*, p. 50.
Rajas of the Panjab, p. 24.
17. One of their ancestors, Rai Rana Molal is said to have come from Bhamer. Fourth in line from him was Tulsī Das, who became a Mohammaden. He had a son, Bharu Rai, who wrested territory from Panwar Rajputs. The seventh from Bharu Rai was Rai Kalha, who is said to have entered the service of the Delhi Emperor. Rai Kalha founded Talwandi, to which the family moved and retained an assignment of villages in the neighbourhood. The family maintained its position as a feudatory of the Empire under the Mughals.

Ludhiana Gazetteer, p. 112.

18. *Fall of Mughal Empire*. J.N. Sarkar, Vol. I, p. 423.
19. In 1657 Bazid Khan founded a town near Maler and named it Kotla. He shifted his family to the new town, which came to be known as Maler Kotla.

Description of Principal Kotla Afghans, p. 10.

20. *Ludhiana District Gazetteer*, pp. 107-108.
21. *Tazakira-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian*.
22. *Tarikh-i-Patala*, p. 55.
23. According to the author of the *Travels of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh* M.S. (Gurmukhi—this has since been published under the title "Sakhi Pothi") the Guru is said to have spoken the following words at village Bangari. These remarks throw a flood of light on the character of the Brars in those days :—"They are dacoits (ਬਾਬਰੀ) and they do not recognise the supremacy of anybody. Their gangs gathered in that village. Now owing to the Guru's presence in the village, they will be improving. They will serve the congregation." p. 44.
24. ਬਟਕ ਬਰਾਕ ਸਾਥੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਓ ਮੁਲਕ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਓ ਸੇ ਨਾ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਓ।
 ਬਟਕ ਬਰਾਕ ਤੋਂ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਆਈ ਮੁਲਕ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਓ ਤੇ ਪਸੁ ਸੇ ਜਾਈ।

Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand, M.S. (Gurmukhi), pp. 65 & 72.

25. *Tarikh-i-Patala*, p. 51.
26. *Hissar District Gazetteer*, p. 25.
27. After the conquest of Delhi by Mohammad Ghori, Kutub-ud-din Aibak was appointed as the Governor of Samana, Kohram and Hissar and his rule in this territory has been described by Nizam-ud-din in the following words:—

"He freed the whole of that country from the thorn of God, plurality and impurity of idol worship. He purged by his sword the land of Hind from the filth of infidelity and vice."

Elliot and Dawson—History of India Vol. II.



Perhaps one of the most horrible irruptions on this tract of land was Timur's invasion. Timur's target was Bhatner. Timur in person pressed the army so hard that he drove them back and captured the city gates. The Bhatias were hunted down from street to street and not a life was spared. Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 113, 116.

Hissar District Gazetteer, p. 125.

28. *Hissar District Gazetteer*; p. 25.

29. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* gives the following lines about Bhattians:-

"A tract of country in the Panjab province covering the Ghaggar Valley from Fatehabad in the District of Hissar to Bhatner in Bikaner. It derives its name from Bhatti a wild Rajput clan who held the country lying between Haryana, Bikaner and Bahawalpur. It skirts the borders of a great sandy desert and only contained a small and scattered population. The Bhattis are a fine tall race making capital soldiers".

30. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 197.

ASCENT TO POWER

1722-1731 A.D.

No one reaches high position without daring.

Syrus

Ala Singh's exceptional powers, robust strength and inborn courage won him a great popularity in his new environments at Barnala, where he had shifted from Bhadaur. In those chaotic days when the roving bands of the Bhattis and Brars used to carry away cattle and women and children in loot and plunder¹ and no man could consider his land, his horse or his wife and his own self safe unless he was strong enough to defend himself and his belongings, daring and stout persons like Ala Singh were always applauded in every locality. Ala Singh and his brother Sabha Singh had already earned a good deal of renown for their boldness and bravery by killing the assassins of their father. The personal valour of Ala Singh helped him a lot to extend his influence at Barnala. Being impressed by his physical strength and manly demeanor, Chowdury Bir Bhan of village Sanghera invited him to his village and accepted his protection in case of any emergency. Ala Singh, therefore, stationed a force at his village².

After his settlement at Barnala, Ala Singh along with his brother pressed the demand for the division of the common ancestral villages, which were under the occupation of the descendants of Tiloka. Unwillingly the descendants of Tiloka appointed Jog Raj and Kala of village Dhanoula as arbitrators and the following villages fell to the lot of the descendants of

Rama :—

- | | | |
|-------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 1. Dhabali | 2. Khorl | 3. Tajo-ke |
| 4. Tapa | 5. Khonse | 6. Mehta |
| 7. Aakalia | 8. Pherwali | 9. Barnala |
| 10. Rampura | 11. Sehna | 12. Ali-ke |
| 13. Malu-ke | 14. Bhadaur | 15. Rai-ki |
| 16. Hadiaya | 17. Jethu-ke ³ | |

Out of these the following villages were given as their share to Ala Singh and Sabha Singh, the elder brother of Ala Singh. Sabha Singh died issueless and his daughter-in-law (son's wife) Resan was married to Sardul Singh, the son of Ala Singh. Consequently his original share of villages as well as his acquisitions were merged with Ala Singh's territory. The following villages which formed the original share of Ala Singh and Sabha Singh proved to be the nucleus for the Patiala Kingdom :—

Barnala, Tapa, Khorl, Tajo-ke, Khonse, Mehta, Aakalia, Pherwali, Hadiaya, Dhabali⁴

Before the division of the possessions, Ala Singh had already conquered Barnala and Tapa whereas his brother Sabha Singh had the possession of Dhabali and Hadiaya. The village Dhabali was occupied by Man Singh (son of Bakhta Singh), his nephew, after the death of Sabha Singh⁵.

Ala Singh wanted to found a village at every strategic place near Sunam. In order to mark the place for the foundation of the village, he stuck a twig as the preparatory sign for founding a village there. The neighbouring zamindar of the village, Chaddari considered himself the owner of the site and he obliterated all the signs of the settlement established by Ala Singh⁶. On hearing this Ala Singh was greatly dismayed and approached his preceptor Bhai Mool Chand for advice.

The holy person hearing the whole account assured him of his success in founding the village. Encouraged by the blessings of Bhai Mool Chand, he again laid the twig on the same site. This time he was successful in founding the village which later on came to be known as Longowal⁷. This village was at a strategic place and Ala Singh used it as a base for further extension of his territories on the Sunam side.

According to the prevalent accounts there occurred another incident, which inspired self-confidence in Ala Singh and prepared him psychologically to grapple with his powerful neighbour. Once Bhai Mool Chand brought one poor Brahmin to Barnala and asked Ala Singh to help the Brahmin. Ala Singh went to his house and got from his wife, Fateh Kaur, all the money she possessed and made it over to the needy Brahmin in the presence of the holy man. Bhai Mool Chand asked the number of rupees given in charity to which Ala Singh replied that he had not counted them and given all he had with him in charity. The holy man was much pleased and blessed him that he would possess countless villages as he had donated countless rupees⁸. Howsoever minor this incident may appear to the modern reader, it played a very significant part in the life of Ala Singh. He had already known the prophecy of Bhai Charan Das that he would be a Raja one day. Now the blessings of Bhai Mool Chand confirmed that prophecy. These blessings greatly emboldened Ala Singh to stem the rising tide of Muslim aggression.

Ever since Ala Singh's occupation of Barnala, Sondhe Khan of village Nims had been carrying on depredations into the territory of Ala Singh, whom he considered to be his rival. Sondhe Khan had high connections with Rai Kalha III of Rai Kot, who was married to the sister of Sondhe Khan⁹. Rai Kalha was considered as one of the most powerful chiefs of the area. So taking himself to be weak Ala Singh could not pay Sondhe Khan in his own coin. But he was on the lookout

for some opportunity to wreak vengeance. Soon an opportunity came itself when Sondhe Khan died. He had adopted a son, Nigahia Khan, who was ousted from Nima by his two real sons¹⁰. Nigahia Khan joined the service of Ala Singh and persuaded him to conquer Nima. Consequently Sardul Singh, son of Ala Singh, and Nigahia Khan successfully attacked Nima and razed it to the ground¹¹ the depredations of Sondhe Khan into Ala Singh's territory were thus avenged.

The conquest of village Nima by Ala Singh had far-reaching consequences. Rai Kalha's anger, was aroused when he heard of the destruction of Nima. Sondhe Khan's sons approached Rai Kalha through his wife, who was the sister of their father. He was determined to nip the evil in the bud and invited all Manj Chiefs for crusade against the rising Sikh chieftain. All the Manj Rajputs (who had been converted to Islam) of Cis-Sutlej territory as well in the Jalandhar Doab got united against Ala Singh¹². The Imperial Faujdar of Jalandhar at that time was Asad Ali Khan¹³, who was a friend of Rai Kalha. He, therefore, joined in his punitive expedition against Ala Singh. Jamal Khan of Maler Kotla¹⁴ also joined the enemy forces. Thus Rai Kalha collecting a large force, about forty thousand, under Daler Khan of Halwara, Kutab-ud-din of Malsianwala with Chiefs of Talwandi, Jamal Khan of Maler Kotla and the Imperial contingent under Asad Ali Khan led an an attack on Barnala¹⁵.

The conquest of Nima had meant a great crisis for Ala Singh. He was alive to the danger and was fully aware of the coming storm. He knew that his conquest of Nima had given the greatest possible affront to Rai Kalha III who would try his best to crush him. In order to meet the impending danger Ala Singh sought the help of the Sikh Dals and invited them to fight on his side¹⁶.

The Sikhs were passing through very hard times in those days. They were the target of ruthless persecution in the province of Lahore. The Governor of Lahore, Zakaria Khan, (1726-45 A.D.) in the early years of his reign had taken special measures to suppress the Sikhs. The moving columns were sent to comb the villages and to exterminate the Sikhs¹⁷ with the result that they had retired to jungles and caves. Some of the Sikh *Dals* came to Cis-Sutlej territory in order to escape the fury and persecution of the Lahore Governor. Ala Singh invited the Sikhs living in that area and explained to them that he was surrounded by hostile forces, as the Muslims had raised the cry of *jehad* against him. In view of this the *Khalsa Dals* decided to join Ala Singh against the allied Muslim chiefs of the area.

When the allied forces of Rai Kalha led an attack on Barnala, Ala Singh took shelter in Barnala fort and began to fight with the besiegers. After some time the *Khalsa Dals* appeared on the scene and for half of the day there was fierce fighting. The hired mercenaries could not fight against zealous and inspired *Khalsa*. Soon Asad Ali Khan, Faujdar of Jalandhar Doab, was found dead. His army lost heart and took to their heels. The example of the army of Asad Ali Khan was followed by others thus causing a great stampede. Soon the hostile forces were routed in which the Sikhs got huge plunder consisting of war weapons¹⁸. Thus with the assistance of the *Khalsa Dals*, Ala Singh defeated the big confederacy of his powerful neighbours.

The battle of Barnala proved to be turning point in the career of Ala Singh. This battle exalted him to the position of a powerful chief of the Cis-Sutlej territory. Besides this it encouraged him to make further conquests and it laid the foundation stone of his territorial acquisitions. Again it was this battle which brought him in closer contact with the

Khalsa Dals, with whose help he was still to win laurels. In short this battle proved to be a prelude of his future greatness. Lepel Griffin has rightly observed :—

"This brilliant success at once made a great improvement in the position of Ala Singh. He was looked upon as one of the most rising chiefs and many zamindars from across Sutlej came to Barnala to take service with him."¹⁹

Some later writers like the author of *Tarikh-i-Patiala* and Latif state that Emperor Mohammad Shah issued a Firman to Ala Singh on account of his brilliant victory over his neighbours. But the close scrutiny of other historical facts leads us to conclude that this statement is not correct²⁰. The victory in the battle of Barnala no doubt made Ala Singh an important figure in the annals of Cis-Sutlej territory.

The most important factor which greatly contributed to the rise of Ala Singh after the battle of Barnala was that he identified himself with the *Khalsa Dals* by taking *Amrit*. He took *pahul* at the hands of Nawab Kapur Singh²¹, the most prominent Sikh leader of his time, at the village Thikriwala, where a Gurdwara has been erected to commemorate this event. It greatly helped him to conquer the territory neighbouring Sunam and to wage a ruthless war against the Bhattis.

References

1. *Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand*, MS., pp. 51, 65, 72 and 74.
2. *Tasakira-i-Khandan-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian*, MS.
3. *Risala-i-Rajju Singh*, M.S.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Risala-i-Rajju Singh* MS.
6. *Tasakira-i-Khandan-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian* MS.
7. *Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand*, p. 93.
Tarikh-i-Dur-e-Shah Vol. I, p. 426.
Tarikh-i-Phulkian wa Mehraj Khan MS.
8. *Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand*, p. 96.

9. *Raj Khalsa*, Giani Gian Singh, p. 13.
10. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 40.
11. *Ibid.*
12. The Manj Rajputs (Muslims) of Talwandi, Rai Kot and Halwara ruled over a very extensive territory, south of the Sutlej, and many Nawabs of Kot Isa had also attained considerable importance and held a large tract of country in the South-West of Jalandhar Doab about Talwan, Nakodar and Malsian. *Glossary of the Punjab Castes and Tribes*, by H.A. Rose
13. The son of Syed Zia was Mohd. Kazim *alias* Syed Shah Ji, whose son was Nawab Asad Ali Khan. He was appointed as faujdar of Jalandhar in the beginning of the reign of Bahadur Shah.

Tazakira-i-Rajab Ali Khan, MS., Persian, p. 8.

14. *Description of Principal Kotla Afghans*, p. 16.
15. *Punjab States Gazetteer* Vol. XVII, p. iii.
Tazakira-i-Khandan-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian.
16. *Raj Khalsa*, Giani Gian Singh, p. 14.
17. *Ibrat Namah Ali-ud-Din* MS. (Persian). It has since been published in Lahore. (Pakistan)
18. *The Rajas of the Panjab*, p. 16.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Vide Appendix No. 5.
21. ਬੇਬੀ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਹੋਂਦ ਲਵਾਓਇ ਲਈ। ਭਜੋ ਅਲੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਪੰਥ ਮਈ।

ਮੁਖਤ ਹੋਜ ਹੀ ਉਨ ਏਕ ਆਈ। ਇਸ ਬੰਮ ਸਭਨ ਲਈ ਬਲਵਾਈ।

Panth Parkash, Rattan Singh, *The Khalsa Samachar* 1939, p. 220.

Vide also Shamsher Khalsa, Part II, p. 45.

According to S. Karam Singh, Ala Singh took *Pahul* from Baba Dip Singh, which does not appear to be correct.

WAR AGAINST THE BHATTIS

*Providence sees to it that no man gets happiness
out of crime*

Alfieri

The wild character and predatory habits of the Bhattis were a constant source of provocation to any man who had strength and determination to wage a war against them. They used to carry on depredations over a very vast tract of territory. The records of the Patiala State and the Bikaner State are full of descriptions of raids by Bhatti *Katals* on the poor inhabitants of the villages and towns.¹ In view of the constant danger of their inroads every village had a mud fort for defence against these marauders.² One of the important towns, within the easy approach of the Bhattis, was Sunam, which had been subjected to Bhatti raids for many a time.³ Similarly the inhabitants of Longowal, the village founded by Ala Singh, were also not safe from Bhatti attacks.

The Bhattis were the hereditary enemies of Ala Singh. Mohan, the grandfather of Phul, was killed in a scuffle against the Bhattis. Roop Chand, the father of Phul, also met the same fate.⁴ After the foundation of Longowal Ala Singh was very closely watching the activities of the Bhattis and was on the lookout for some opportunity to stem back the ever rising tide of Bhatti aggression. He got this opportunity when the *Khalsa Dals* moved to the Cis-Sutlej territory owing to the ruthless persecution by the Lahore Governor, Zakaria Khan (1726-1745).

Ala Singh invited the Dals to this territory and with

their help attacked the Bhatti Chiefs, Allahdad Khan Bohewala, Inayat Khan and Vilayat Khan of Budhlada and Bahar Khan of Hariaho. These Bhatti Chief were related to Mohammad Amin Khan of Bhatner,⁵ who was the most powerful chief of his time. The *Khalsa Dals* exacted tribute from the Bhatti territory. The desultory warfare continued for more than ten years.⁶ Ala Singh was successful in breaking the spell of Bhatti power and ultimately founded several villages adjoining Longowal and Sunam.

After his successful campaigns against the Bhattis, Ala Singh undertook to colonize the land and found villages in the areas, which were previously under the influence of the Bhattis. He founded Chhajli,⁷ Dirba⁸ and Sheron.⁹ Ala Singh's new villages served the purpose. After some years they proved to be the source of income and also paved the way for his further conquest towards Sunam¹⁰.

Another important acquisition of Ala Singh during this period was Dodan¹¹, modern Bhawanigarh, which, in the subsequent years proved to be the most important base for carrying on the war against the Bhattis. Dodan was originally founded by Sabha Singh¹², the elder brother of Ala Singh. He died issueless in 1744 A.D.¹³ leaving behind his wife, Begi, and his daughter-in-law, Resan, wife of Jodha, his deceased

Begi and Resan could not pull on together. When Ala Singh went to condole the death of his brother, he found that Resan, the widow of Jodha, was bricked up in a room by her mother-in-law¹⁴. Ala Singh, therefore, encouraged Sardul Singh, his son, to take Resan into wedlock. Sardul Singh hurried to Hadiya¹⁵ and approached Resan with the intention to establish the matrimonial alliance with her. She agreed to the proposal and their marriage was solemnized by the *Karewa* custom¹⁶.

This marriage is significant in the territorial acquisition

of Ala Singh. It brought him the estate of his brother, Sabha Singh. Dodan, Ralla, Hadasya and Khuddi were the important villages annexed by Ala Singh¹⁷. Dodan proved to be an important base for the further conquest of Bhatti territory. Ala Singh, however, could not consolidate his newly-acquired possessions owing to changed political conditions at Sirhind.

References

1. *Sirsa District Settlement Report*, p. 31.
2. *The Rajas of the Punjab*, p. 17.
3. *Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand*, p. 51.
4. *Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran*, p. 19.
5. Bhainer is modern Hanumangarh in Bikaner State.
6. *Shamsher Khalsa*—Glanai Gian Singh—Vol. II, p. 3.
7. ਭਈ ਸਰਿਬ ਤੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਧਿਆਈ। ਭਾਉ ਭਾਸਲੀ ਮੋਤੀ ਭਾਈ।
Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand, p. 18
8. *Tazakira-i-Khandan-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian*. According to Kanwar Singh, Haria and Saria, the brothers of Fateh Kaur, founded village Kamalpur. All this colonuzation, around Sunam, paved the way for further conquests.
9. *Tarikh-i-Patlaia*, p. 44.
10. ਅਲੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੜਾ ਬਾਧੇ ਪਸਰਾ। ਭਿਰਦ ਘੋਲੇ ਉਨ ਸੁਲਾਖੇ ਸਾਰਾ।
Panth Parkash—Rattan Singh, p. 220.
11. Dodan, modern Bhawanigarh, had a great strategic importance for waging war against the Bhattis. It was made the base for the conquest of the Bhattis by Maharaja Amar Singh, grandson of Maharaja Ala Singh.
Var Amar Singh, Prachin Jang Nama.
12. Sabha Singh, the elder brother of Ala Singh, was the second son of Rama. He was a very pushing youngman and had carved his principality by dint of his own prowess. He was married to Begi of village Maur. She gave birth to a son, Jodha. Jodha was married to Resan of village Ralla. Jodha died young without leaving any issue. This proved to be a great shock to Sabha Singh, who could not survive long after the death of his youthful son. *Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran*, p. 67.
13. According to *Tazakira-i-Rajgan Phulkian* by Mana Singh Grewal, Kanwar Himmat Singh was born when Ala Singh was in the imprisonment of Ali Mohammad Khan, who came to Sirhind in the end of 1743 or in the beginning of 1746. A.D. The marriage of Resan, Jodha's widow, with Sardul

Singh had taken place just after the death of Sabha Singh, which therefore, appears to have occurred in 1744 A.D.

14. *Tazakira-i-Rajgoni-i-Phulkian* by Mane Singh Grewal.
15. Bhag Singh, son of Bekhta Singh, also wanted to marry Resan. *Risala-i-Rajju Singh*.
16. *The Karewa* custom briefly means widow remarriage.
This custom has been abolished from the Phulkian Houses of Nabha, Patiala and Jind.

Tarikh-i-Siddhu Breron, p. 112.

17. *Risala-i-Rajju Singh*.

DARK DAYS

1745-1748 A.D.

The lowest ebb is the turn of the tide.

Longfellow

After the battle of Barnala, Ala Singh began to be considered as one of the powerful chieftains of the Cis-Sutlej territory as he had acquired many possessions. But despite all this, like other chieftains of the territory, he could not shake off the authority of Ali Mohammad Khan, the powerful *Faujdar* of Sirhind, whose appointment there cast a spell of gloom over the career of Ala Singh.

Ali Mohammad Khan was an upstart. When only seven or eight years old he was captured by Daud Khan Rohilla¹, who adopted him as his son². Brave and daring as Ali Mohammad Khan was, he enriched himself by winning laurels from the *Faujdar* of Muradabad³. During the confusion consequent upon Nadir's invasion of Afghanistan and India, many Rohillas flocked around his banner. Taking advantage of the critical times he increased his power by seizing the neighbouring parganas. Harnand, a local officer in that area, was appointed to suppress the Rohilla rebel but Harnand was defeated and killed. His war equipments and property fell into the hands of Ali Mohammad Khan⁴.

The rise of Ali Mohammad Khan alarmed Safdar Jang, the Nawab of Oudh, who considered the rise of Rohillas a standing threat to his own territory and wanted to nip the evil in the bud. He induced Emperor Mohammad Shah to lead an expedition in person to suppress the Rohillas. Mohammad

Shah's campaign against Ali Mohammad Khan revealed the utter rottenness of the Imperial Government and the worthlessness of its military machine⁵. The Mughal army that had once conquered the whole of India could not take any effective action against a few thousand Rohillas. Wazir Qamar-ud-din, who in his heart of hearts, was on the side of Ali Mohammad Khan, induced the Emperor to patch up peace with the Rohilla leader. Ali Mohammad Khan was asked to surrender. He was arrested and brought to Delhi alongwith royal forces in May 1745⁶. Ali Mohammad Khan remained in the royal imprisonment for about six months⁷, after which the Emperor granted him release and bestowed upon him the *Faujdari* of Sirhind. Ali Mohammad Khan reached Sirhind just about the end of 1745 A.D.

Taking the version of the author of *Tarikh-i-Patiala* to be true, Griffin and other writers like Giani Gian Singh had adopted the following circumstances for the arrest of Ala Singh at the hands of Ali Mohammad Khan :—

"Ala Singh made friends with Ali Mohammad Khan and helped him against Rai Kalha. Rai Kalha was defeated and he fled to Pakpattan and his brother Mukhan Khan was killed. But the Sikh Chief was too independent to be on good terms with Ali Mohammad Khan for a long period. After the campaign against Rai Kalha, Ala Singh sought permission from Ali Mohammad Khan to go to his place. But he was imprisoned in 1741 A.D."⁸

The above statement establishes the following hypothesis:-

- (i) Ala Singh was imprisoned by Ali Mohammad Khan in 1741 A.D.
- (ii) Ala Singh helped Ali Mohammad Khan against Rai Kalha.

Let us examine it in relation to other historical events.

The above-quoted authorities agree that Ala Singh was arrested by Ali Mohammad Khan Rohilla and they hold that the imprisonment of Ala Singh took place in 1741, which is highly improbable. It is agreed on all hands that Ali Mohammad Khan was appointed the *Faujdar* of Sirhind in 1745 A.D.⁹ It is, therefore, not borne out by facts that Ali Mohammad Khan arrested Ala Singh in 1741 A.D.

After the arrival of Ali Mohammad Khan at Sirhind his general, Hafiz Rehmat, led the punitive expedition against Rai Kalha. Hafiz Rehmat's son, Mustajab Ali has written *Gulistan-i-Rehmat* in which he describes in details the campaign against Rai Kalha. In this campaign Hafiz Rehmat was assisted by Dundi Khan and Buddo Khan. Ali Mohammad Khan remained at Sirhind and directed fresh Rohilla troopers, who reached Sirhind, to accompany Hafiz Rehmat. As stated in *Gulistan-i-Rehmat* Jamal Khan of Maler Kotla also joined hands against Rai Kalha. There is no mention of Ala Singh's help to Ali Mohammad Khan or to Hafiz Rehmat against Rai Kalha.

It cannot be presumed that the omission is just accidental because from the same source we learn that Ala Singh was the first person to be invited to Sirhind just after the arrival of Ali Mohammad Khan there.

Gulistan-i-Rehmat and *Gul-i-Rehmat* give us the following chain of events regarding Ali Mohammad Khan's stay at Sirhind :—

"On reaching Sirhind, Ali Mohammad Khan summoned the refractory zimindars Ala Jat, Pahara Mal of Rajpur, Rai Kalha, Nigahia Mal, chief of Jodhmansur, and others to attend at his place and to pay arrears of revenue due from them on pain of expulsion from their estates. To the summons they indignantly answered that they were a different class of people from those whom he had subjugated in Kutchar, and that they were to follow the example of his predecessor in office. They

would make a reasonable settlement but, if not, they were ready to meet him in the field. Ali Mohammad got enraged at this message and he would immediately have marched against them in person but was persuaded to permit Hafiz Rehmat to make a first trial of strength with them. Accordingly Hafiz accompanied by Dundi Khan and Buddo Khan each at the head of three thousand horses and foot marched to Raipur to attack Pahara Mal, who had assembled twelve thousand men to oppose him. The Afghans divided into four parties and surrounded the village while Hafiz personally attacked the fort with five hundred chosen men. The simultaneous attack of these five divisions so distracted the villagers that they left the gate open. The fort being entered in by the Afghans, Pahara Mal's followers were defeated with great slaughter. The plunder found in the fort was considerable and two thousand five hundred persons were made prisoners. Jamal Khan of Maler Kotla with five hundred men having joined Hafiz Rehmat, the combined forces marched to Jodhpore (Jodhmansur) and defeated the forces of Nigahia Mal, taking him prisoner. The arrears of revenue amounting to sixtyfive thousand rupees were immediately recovered. Rai Kalha, the principal zimindar, was in possession of a strong fortress. The force under Hafiz was considerably increased by the fresh influx of the Rohillas. While the Afghans were yet a day's march distant, Rai Kalha took to flight leaving the defence of the fort to his brother Makhan Khan, who held out for two days, but surrendered when preparations were made for storming it. Rai Kalha on hearing of this disaster consented to pay the arrears demanded, of one million and thirty thousands rupees. After these examples Ali Mohammad Khan found no difficulty realizing the revenue of the province."

From the above chain of events the following conclusions can be drawn :—

- (i) Prominent persons among those who were summoned to Sirhind by Ali Mohammad Khan were Ala Singh, Pahara Mal, Nigahia Mal and Rai Kalha.
- (ii) Punitive expeditions were undertaken against Pahara Mal, Nigahia Mal and Rai Kalha because they did not come to Sirhind in response to Ali Mohammad's summons.
- (iii) Ala Singh's name is the first among those who were invited. We do not hear anything about him afterwards.

It has been accepted by various authorities that Ala Singh was arrested by Ali Mohammad Khan. Circumstantial evidence as stated above leads us to conclude that Ala Singh was arrested when in response to Ali Mohammad Khan's call he went to Sirhind. Had Ala Singh not responded to the call of Ali Mohammad Khan, some military action would certainly have been taken against him just as it was taken against Rai Kalha, Pahara Mal and Nigahia Mal. This conclusion is further confirmed by the author of *Ahwal-i-Najibuddaula* (Persian Manuscript written in April 16, 1787 A.D.) in which it is stated that Ala Singh was summoned to Sirhind and was arrested there¹⁰. Later on Ala Singh was interned in the Sunam Fort¹¹.

After the arrest of Ala Singh, Barnala was plundered and his family was rendered destitute. During these dark days Hummat Singh, the grandson of Ala Singh, was born of Resan, the second wife of Sardul Singh.¹² Ala Singh's family faced great financial difficulties during his imprisonment. Ali Mohammad Khan had deprived the family of its property and wealth. His policy of loot and plunder in the territory of Sirhind has rightly been described as "half robbery".¹³ Ala Singh remained under confinement for more than two years i.e. from the end of 1745 to the beginning of 1748 A.D.

The release of Ala Singh was brought about by Karam

Singh. He was one of the descendants of Sema, the half brother of Roop Chand, the father of Phul. Sema had two sons, Chain Singh and Alam Singh. The latter had a grandson Karam Singh *alias* Karma.

The line of Sema and the descendants of Rama were hereditary enemies. Rama had killed Chain Singh, whose sons had subsequently finished Rama. The law of nemesis took its course and the sons of Rama, Sabha Singh and Ala Singh, in order to wreak vengeance for the death of their father killed Bira and Kamala, the assassins of Rama.¹⁴ Ugarsen, the brother of Bira and Kamala, sought safety in flight to Sema. The village Sema was also destroyed and the descendants of Sema were turned out of Mehraj¹⁵, their ancestral village. Alam Singh, the brother of Chain Singh, had a grandson, Karam Singh *alias* Karma.

When Ala Singh was confined in Sunam fort, Karma found it a good opportunity to bring about rapprochement between the two warring families. He planned the flight of Ala Singh with the help of Jiwan Singh Randhawa¹⁶ and others. Karma himself went into the fort and there he took the seat of Ala Singh and wore his dress. Ala Singh came out secretly and reached the appointed place. *Tammak*¹⁷ was beaten as a signal for the safe arrival of Ala Singh. On hearing the sound of the *Tammak*, Karma jumped out of the fort and joined the party. Now the party started towards village Longowal. The sound of the *Tammak* had made the watchmen of the fort alert and they smelt that there was something wrong. Soon after they came to know that Ala Singh had escaped.

A small force which was kept in the fort for the sake of protection set out to pursue the absconders. By that time Ala Singh had received reinforcement and safely reached Longowal. The pursuing army was defeated¹⁸ and was compelled to retire.

This action of Karma's self-sacrifice for Ala Singh's release had a great effect in ending the family feud. Now Ala Singh and his brothers allowed the line of Sema to settle at their ancestral village Mehraj and their due share of land was given to them.¹⁹

Ali Mohammad Khan, the *Faujdar* of Sirhind, does not appear to have taken any action against Ala Singh on account of his flight from the Sunam fort. The only reason for his keeping quiet was that he himself was preparing to leave Sirhind. The rumour was abroad about Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasion of India. There upon Ali Mohammad Khan fled away from Sirhind in the middle of February 1748 A.D.²⁰

References

1. Rohillas were the inhabitants of the mountainous region Roh which extends from Indus to Hindu Kush and includes Bijour, Kabul, Kandhar and Ghazni. After the second battle of Panipat they scattered all over the country and some of them settled at Katchar. During the confusion consequent upon the death of Aurangzeb, many Afghan adventurers of Roh migrated into India and settled at Katchar. One such early emigrant was Daud Khan, then a dependent in the family of Shahab-ud-din Khan at Torshahamat in Roh.

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2. Behari Lal author of *Ahwal-i-Nijibudaula*, M.S., states that boy captured was the beautiful son of a Hindu Jat of village Saddi. He was converted to Islam despite the bewailing of his parents.
3. *Fall of Mughal Empire*, J.N. Sarkar, Vol. I, p. 47.
4. *Calcutta Review*, CXXII, 1873.
Calendar of Persian correspondence, Vol. IV.
5. Anand Ram Mukhlis, who was himself present in the campaign on the imperial army, states, "Emperor was humiliated by the reasons of his nobles failing to subdue this *talukdar* of a few villages." *Tazakira MS.*
6. *Muasar-ul-Umara*, Vol. 2, p. 841.
Tazakira-i-Anand Ram, MS.
J.N. Sarkar, *Fall of Mughal Empire* Vol. I, p. 57.
7. *The Rohilla Afghans*—*Calcutta Review*, Vol. CXL.
According to the authors of *Gul-i-Rahmat* and *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, Ali

Mohammad Khan was imprisoned for six months at Delhi after which he waited for Hafiz Rahmat for five months and then he proceeded towards Sirhind. This does not appear to be correct. The stay of Ali Mohammad Khan for about a year is not confirmed by any other authority. The author of *Hadikat-ul-Aqalim* states that Ali Mohammad Khan stayed at Delhi for a few months. The author of *Muzar-ul-Umara* also confirms the short stay of Ali Mohammad at Delhi. J.N. Sarker states:—Ali Mohammad was now removed from the scene of his mischievous activity, detained at Delhi for "some months" and finally sent off to Sirhind as its Faujdar."

Fall of Mughal Empire, Vol. I, p. 63.

8. *The Rajas of the Punjab*, p. 20.
Tarikh-i-Patiala, p. 47.
Raj Khalsa—Giani Guran Singh, p. 15.
Punjab States Gazetteer Part A. Introduction, p. (iii).
9. *Tazaktra-i-Anand Ram, Persian, M.S.*
Fall of Mughal Empire (1971) Vol. I, 133-34.
10. **آں وقت راجہ لاسنگی کے سردار نہیندلاں آں غلیہ بُرد و فیر جیسے
تیسرے۔**
Ahwal-i-Najibuddaula. Ali Mohammad Khan, wa Dondi Khan, p. 35.
Transcribed copy at Khalsa College, Amritsar.
11. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 47.
12. *Tarikh-i-Rajgan Patiala*—Man Singh Grewal and Bira Singh.
13. *Calcutta Review*, CXXII.
14. *The Rajas of the Punjab*, Griffin, p. 15.
15. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 39.
16. *Raj Khalsa*, Giani Gian Singh, p.15.
17. Tamnak was a sort of drum used for sounding alarm.
18. According to Giani Gian Singh, the following persons helped in defeating the pursuing force—Jiwan Singh and Jodha Singh of village Sheron, Fateh Singh Surami, Ladha Singh, Ram Datt Singh, Diwan Darya Singh, Haria Singh Sekhon, Gurbaksh Singh, Asa Singh Kaleka, Bhoga Singh of Longowal, Boota Singh, Jhendu Singh etc.
19. *Raj Khalsa*, Giani Gian Singh, p. 15.
Muzar-ul-Umara, p. 841.
20. *Fall of Mughal Empire*, (1971) Vol. I, pp. 133-34.

ALA SINGH'S AID TO PRINCE AHMAD IN THE BATTLE OF MANUPUR 1748 A.D.

A Pound of pluck is worth a ton of luck

A. Garfield

When Ala Singh escaped from the fort of Sunam, the political horizon of the Punjab was overcast with the clouds of Ahmad Shah¹ Abdali's² invasion. The conquest of Peshawar by Abdali and his intended march towards Lahore disturbed the political set up at Sirhind. In order to profit from the disorder to be caused by Abdali's invasion Ali Mohammad Khan, Faujdar of Sirhind, left his post of his own accord and reached his original territory, Katchar. By doing so he killed two birds with one stone. Firstly, had he been at Sirhind he might have been pressed by Wazir Qamar-ud-din to fight against Ahmad Shah Abdali, a man of his own nationality. Secondly, by his flight from Sirhind he avoided the payment of dues to the Imperial treasury which he otherwise could not refuse.³ Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasion, Ali Mohammad's departure from Sirhind and Delhi Government's defensive measures gave Ala Singh the opportunity to display his bravery and tact.

On hearing about the invasion of India by Ahmad Shah, the Mughal Emperor, Mohammad Shah (1719-1748 A.D.), deputed his son, Prince Ahmad, to check the progress of the invader. The Prince moved towards Sirhind with a powerful army. After making Sirhind the base for the supply of food and ammunition he marched towards Machhiwara⁴ in order to arrest the advance of the invader.⁵ Ahmad Shah Abdali proved

very shrewd and successfully dodged the Imperial army by crossing the Sutlej at Ludhiana. He reached Sirhind by night march. The Mughal garrison were taken unawares. They offered feeble resistance, after which they surrendered. The treasury, artillery and women left by the Imperial army were captured by Abdali. On hearing of this, the Prince immediately beat a hurried retreat from Machhiwara side and reached Manupur and entrenched himself there for the fight which continued for sixteen day.⁶

Ala Singh played a prominent part during this fight against Ahmad Shah Abdali. The war strategy of the Imperial army was to cut off the supplies of Abdali's forces and ultimately overpower them. It was during the economic blockade of the invader that Ala Singh exhibited extraordinary courage and pluck. When the Afghan parties came out from their camp to procure their foodgrains by loot and plunder from the surrounding villages, Ala Singh along with Rai Kalha used to fall upon them and deprive them of their booty. The Afghan troopers who came out on such expeditions were so much harassed and teased that Ahmad Shah Abdali ordered that every foraging party should be accompanied by a military contingent.⁷

Ala Singh's efforts to make successful the economic blockade of Abdali's army did not remain unrecognized and unrewarded. Prince Ahmad greatly appreciated the courage, valour and audacity of Ala Singh and rewarded him with a robe of honour *khilat* after the successful termination of war.⁸ Ahmad Shah Abdali retired to his own country.⁹

The imperial robe of honour granted to Ala Singh removed the stigma of his imprisonment and raised his prestige in the eyes of the chieftains of the area. It increased his self-confidence and encouraged him for further conquest and expansion of his territories.

References

1. Ahmad Shah was born at Herat in 1723 A.D. and was crowned at Kandhar in October 1747 and died in 1773 A.D. *Muqaddma Ahmad Shah Baba*, published by Maqtab-i- Amomia-Kabul (Afghanistan).
2. An ancestor of Ahmad was a disciple of saint Khwaja Abu Ahmad Abdal of Chishti order and so pleased his master by his devotion that the holy man blessed him and called him "Abdal", a word which means a man free from earthly bonds by reason of his close communion with God. Ahmad Shah also took the title of Durr-i-Durrani or Pearl among Pearls and hence his dynasty is also called Durrani.
Tarikh-i-Hussain Shahi, MS., Page 4-5
3. The author of Gulistan-i-Rahmat gives the reasons for the departure of Ali Mohammad Khan from Sirhind in the following words:-
When Mohammad Shah was busy preparing to offer resistance, he was afraid that Ali Mohammad Khan might join Ahmad Shah, with his twenty thousand troops. When the matter was brought before the Wazir for consultation, the Wazir suggested to issue the orders of the transfer of Ali Mohammad Khan from Sirhind to Kutchar. Mohammad Shah liked the suggestion and issued the orders.
4. Machhuwara and Ludhiana were two important ferries for crossing the Sutlej.
5. *History of the Punjab*, p. 217.
Tarikh-i-Afghana by Syed Zahurul Hassan, p. 18.
6. Tarikh-i-Hussain Shahi, MS., p. 21.
Risala-i-Ahwal-i-Nanak Shah Darwesh by Budh Singh, MS., p. 16.
7. Anand Ram who was the contemporary writer and who himself was present in the battle, writes :-

ہر تقدیر اکثر اوقات آلاز چندہ بعض دیات سرمندوئے گلاز چندہ
 دواہ از تہود و جماعت بر تہیہ غلاف تافتہ دہلیغ خفیر و اجرت و قین سافتہ
 قطار قطار شتر و آشرہ آوردہ بطاعت خلعت و اسب و نقد سرا افتادہ
 بر افراختہ

Tazakira-i-Anand Ram, MS., page 271.

8. *Tazakira-i-Anand Ram*, page 271. In short the army of Ahmad Shah Abdali could not face the enemy and turned their forces towards Kabul and Kandhar and Mohammad Taqi, his commander-in-chief, was killed. The Prince and other Indian nobles, keeping in view the death of Wazir Qammar-ud-din, did not pursue the enemy and called halt on the Sutlej.
Bian-i-Waqia-i-Abdul Karim, MS.
9. In the battle of Manapur Wazir Qammar-ud-din, was shot dead by a bullet shot. His son Mir Mannu plucked courage and led the attack on the Abdali army. Some pieces of artillery which Abdali had secured from Lahore after the flight of Shah Niwaz Khan (son of Zakaria Khan) caught fire creating confusion and panic in the Abdali army. Ultimately the Prince and Mir Mannu were victorious and Abdali retired to his own country after crossing the Sutlej. For details vide *Fall of Mughal Empire Vol. I* pp. 207 to 232.

EXTENSION OF TERRITORIES 1748-1754 A.D.

*Good luck is the willing handmaid of upright
and energetic character*

Lowell

As soon as Ala Singh was free from the battle of Manupur, he turned his attention towards Jodha', the ruler of Bhatinda, who had been active in exciting rebellion among his subjects during his imprisonment. The Sabo Jats of villages Uba, Ghuman, the surrounding villages of Kutiwal, Bhaini and Churwali, were encouraged by Jodha to throw off the allegiance of Ala Singh.² The latter was successful in suppressing the revolt of his subjects and now he was on the lookout to give punishment to the instigator. Jodha had offended Ala Singh in another way too. He had intended to marry the fiancée of Bhai Gurbaksh Singh, the friend of Ala Singh. When the latter came to know of his nefarious designs, he sent him a word through his nephew, Baga Mal (son of Dunna Singh), to desist from this action. Paying no heed to this, Jodha brought that girl (daughter of Gairda Chahil) into his matrimonial alliance. This led to an attack by Ala Singh and his friend Gurbaksh Singh.³ They also invited the Khalsa Dals⁴ to their side. Jodha could not face the combined forces which exacted a tribute from his territory. The villages of Chak Bhuchio and Gobindpura were conquered and subsequently assigned to Bhai Gurbaksh Singh.⁵

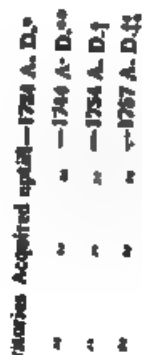
After the chastisement of Jodha, Ala Singh turned his attention to the consolidation of Dodan. Dodan, (modern Bhawanigarh) was originally founded by Sabha Singh⁶ the elder brother of Ala Singh. But soon he was removed by the cruel

hands of death. After his death Dodan passed into the hands of Ala Singh, who decided to build a stronghold there. But he was opposed by Farid Khan, a powerful man of the locality.

Farid Khan resided in the village of Kakra,⁷ two miles from Dodan. He considered Ala Singh's possession so near his village, as very dangerous and decided to oust him from Dodan. He was fully aware that he alone could not fight against the rising Sikh chief. In order to enlist help against his enemy, he set out to Samana⁸, the Pargana headquarter. On the way Amar Singh, an official of Ala Singh, fell upon Farid Khan. In the scuffle that followed, Farid Khan was killed and his companions fled. The estate of Farid Khan which constituted about one fourth of the Pargana of Samana, was annexed. The neighbouring villages were also conquered.⁹ A fort was constructed at Dodan. Around the fort there grew up a prosperous town which later came to be known as Bhawani-Garh.¹⁰ This fort proved very important base for further extension of his territories towards Munak.

The conquest of Munak is associated with the military exploits of Lal Singh, the youngest son of Ala Singh. Lal Singh once requested his father to grant him some Jagir. Ala Singh, tactful as he was, replied, "You are a young Brar." cannot you conquer some territory yourself." This remark greatly pricked Lal Singh, who determined to conquer some area.¹²

Prior to the rise of Ala Singh, Munak was included in the Pargana of Tohana¹³ and was held by Sardar Khan, a Muslim Rajput of the locality. Owing to the confusion which followed Nadir's invasion and the weakening of the Mughal Government, the inroads of the Bhatti marauders had increased. The inhabitants of Munak sought the help of Abu Khan and Salim Khan, who came there and established their influence at Munak. After some time, Sardar Khan felt jealous of the power



and influence of the new comers. He, therefore, persuaded Lal Singh to oust Abu Khan and Salim Khan from Munak.¹⁴

Lal Singh was already on the lookout to conquer some territory. He agreed to the proposal and sent a force with Sardar Khan. Abu Khan and Salim Khan were away from the fort. Taking advantage of the absence of the enemies, Sardar Khan led a night attack with 300 horsemen, and occupied the fort. He informed about his success to Lal Singh, who hurried to reinforce him. Abu Khan and Salim Khan had no courage left to oppose the occupation. This happened in 1750 A.D.¹⁵

The fort of Munak proved to be one of the most important base for carrying on war into the Bhatti territory. Ala Singh took special measures to keep a large force there. For all the subsequent battles with the Bhattis like the battle of Khudal and the battle of Rampura, Ala Singh used this fort as his military base. Moreover, with the conquest of Munak Lal Singh resettled and occupied the neighbouring territories.

Munak was linked with the territory of Tohana which was under the ultimate control of Kamgar Khan, Nawab of Farrukh Nagar.¹⁶ Kamgar Khan sent Bahadur Khan, one of his employees¹⁷ to collect revenue from the territory of Hissar. When Bahadur Khan reached Tohana, Lal Singh left Munak and its surrounding territory.¹⁸ Bahadur Khan exacted tributes from the area and left Tohana after a few months. Immediately after his departure, Lal Singh returned to Munak and reoccupied his possessions. He resettled the following villages:-

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| (i) Salemgarh ¹⁹ | (ii) Kularian. |
| (iii) Lalun. | (iv) Dhamtan. |
| (v) Lawan. | (vi) Khari. |
| (vii) Peepal Thah. | (viii) Balupur. |
| (ix) Bel Rekhan | (x) Surjan ²⁰ |

So long as Lal Singh was alive he took keen interest in the administration of this territory but after his death in 1757 A.D.²¹ the territory came under the direct control of Ala Singh.

The conquest of Munak and Samana brought immense popularity to Ala Singh. He began to be looked upon as the most powerful man of the area. The villages which came under Ala Singh prospered because the villagers had a sense of safety from dacoits and Bhatti raids. In those chaotic times, Ala Singh had sufficient force and strength to protect the territories under him. His founding of Longowal, Chhajli, Dirba and Uba was a sufficient proof of his deep interest in the peasants of the area. Moreover his secular outlook which was demonstrated by his help even to the deserving Muslims²² won him the sympathies of the Muslim zamindars outside his control. Mohammad Saleh Khokhar of Pargana Sanaur, also known as Chaurasi because it consisted of 84 (eightyfour) villages, was an ardent admirer of Ala Singh. He persuaded the zamindars of his Pargana to accept the overlordship and protection of Ala Singh. His advice was accepted and presents were made to the Sikh chieftain as a token of their submission. Ala Singh appointed Gurbaksh Singh Kaleke, a cousin of his wife, to the control of the newly acquired territory.²³

In order to consolidate the newly acquired territory Ala Singh wanted to build a stronghold in the territory of Sanaur.

There was a small village Pattan Wala (Theb), three miles from Sanaur. Ala Singh encouraged Gurbaksh Singh Kaleke to build a mud fort at the site, (which is now known as Garhi Sodhian in Patiala) and stationed there one thousand soldiers.²⁴ Gradually a prosperous town grew up there. Subsequent events, especially the sack of Sirhind and the death of Zain Khan, the *Faujdar* of Sirhind, favoured further growth of this town, which was made the capital of the State in the closing years of Ala Singh.

References

1. Jodha was a son of Sukha son of Kapura, of Kot Kapura. Jodha succeeded his father in 1731 A.D. He fought against Baba Ala Singh and Maharaja Amar Singh. He was killed in a fight against Maharaja Amar Singh in 1768 A.D. *The Rajas of the Punjab*, p. 604.
2. *Baba Ala Singh (Gurmukhi)* by Karam Singh, pp. 141-142.
3. *Alta-i-Brar Bans*, Vol 3, pp. 321
Tarikh-i-Patiala, p. 51.
4. Mir Mannu son of Wazir Qamar-ud-din, in reward for his courageous action in the battle of Manupur was appointed the governor of Lahore in March 1748. With his accession to power in the Panjab there issued a severe wave of the persecution of the Sikhs. The Sikhs mostly retired to the territory South of the Sutlej. When Baba Ala Singh and his friend Bhai Gurbaksh Singh came to know about their arrival, they persuaded them to fight against Jodha.
5. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 52.
6. *Risal-i-Rajju Singh* (Persian manuscript).
7. 'Kakkar is the name of an Afghan tribe and the village Kakra was founded by members of that tribe, hence the village was known by that name.
Tarikh-i-Hayat-i-Afghana
8. Samana is 17 miles South-West of Patiala. Tradition avers that it was enlarged and named by the fugitives of Samana dynasty of Persia.
Punjab States Gazetteer, p. 204
9. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 49
10. Giani Gian Singh, *Raj Khalsa*, p. 16.
11. According to the custom of the time, the title of Brar, goes to the descendants of the eldest son of Siddhu Brar, the ancestors of the Rajas of Faridkot. But the line of Baba Ala Singh belonged to Puar, the younger brother of Brar. The Puar's descendants also took pride in calling themselves Brar.
12. *Tazakira-i-Khandan-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian*.
13. *Boundary Dispute Correspondence-Vol. I* p. 739.
14. *Ibid*.
15. *Ibid*.
16. About the year 1718 Hariana was granted in Jagir to Rukan-ud-Daula, who in his turn made over the greater part of it to the management of the Baluch noble, Fauzdar Khan. He was made in 1732 A.D. the Nawab of Farrukh Nagar (in Gurgaon District) with a territory which embraced the whole of the present districts of Hissar, Rohtak and a part of Gurgaon Dist. Fauzdar

Khan died in 1747 and was succeeded by his son Kamgar Khan, who retained his possession upto 1760 *Rohtak Gazetteer, p. 182.*

17

فصل این حال آنگه از زبان ملت جمعی کثیر از فرد بچان و در فرخ
 سکونت داشتند. در عهد محمد شاه یک از آنها کنگار خاں نام اتسار بم
 مسیره فرجی کرد. حکومت پانی پت و جیسا گاه گاه با اختیار او بود.
 بهادر خاں یک از طایفان او طرح نموده سارنپور یافت. بواسطه
 همدانک بر تبه امارت رسید. هفت هزاری گردید.

Mukhtasul Twarikh, Syed Farzand Ali, MS Persuan Tms. copy Khalsa College, p. 53.

18. *Rad Jawab-i-Waukala-i-Raja of Patiala dar Mukadma-i-Munak, p. 789, Boundary Dispute Correspondence Vol. I*
19. Salemgarh was founded by Salem Khan who was ousted from Munak by Lal Singh. After his conquest of Munak, Lal Singh occupied this village. *Statement (dated 7-12-1830) of Ram Karam S/o Dharma of village Kularian. Boundary Dispute Correspondence Vol. II*
20. *Representation of Kapur Singh, Wakil of Maharaja of Patiala. Boundary Dispute Correspondence*
21. *Baba Ala Singh, Karm Singh (Gurmukhi) p. 170.*
22. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, states that Lakhna Dogar, a Muslim, was the Commander-in-Chief of the army of Baba Ala Singh.
23. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 50.
24. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 50.
The Rajas of the Punjab, p. 21.
Lalif's History of the Punjab, p. 327.

towards Buddhlada and besieged it. The besiegers sought the help of Mohammad Amin Khan of Bhatner, the most powerful Bhatti chief of his time, but with no response. After some minor skirmishes for two days, the besieged emerged from the fort to fight the besiegers. In the fight that ensued, the Bhattis were eventually defeated. Inayat Khan and Walayat Khan were killed along with their 700 men. Five hundred Sikhs were lost in the battle. Buddhlada and Boha passed into the hands of Ala Singh. After four years he bestowed these possessions on Bhai Gurbaksh Singh.¹ The conquest of Buddhlada and Boha gave Ala Singh an impetus to extend his territories into the *Parganas* of Tohana and Jamalpur.

Prior to the rise of Ala Singh, Tohana was the *Pargana* headquarter under Mir Ashad Ali Khan Baloch, who used to collect revenue from Tohana and the surrounding territory. Jamalpur was also a *Pargana*⁴ headquarter under the brothers Shams-ul-din, and Hassan Ullah. Both these *Parganas* were under the ultimate control of Nawab Kamgar of Farrukhnagar and his agent Bahadur Khan exacted tribute from these two *Parganas* on behalf of the Nawab upto 1751 A.D.⁵

After the conquest of Buddhlada and Boha, Bhai Gurbaksh Singh led the *Dal Khalsa* to Tohana and Jamalpur. The inhabitants of Jamalpur fearing the inroads of the Sikh bands had sought the protection of Mohammad Amin Khan Bhatti of Bhatner as he had stationed there some force. But that force could not stand against the Sikhs, who exacted tribute and these two *Parganas* were annexed to Ala Singh's territory.⁶

The defeat and death of Inayat Khan, and Walayat Khan and the conquest of Tohana and Jamalpur by the Sikhs enraged Mohammad Amin Khan. He considered it not only a great material loss but also a great humiliation and insult to the pride of the Bhattis. He, therefore, enlisted the military aid of the *Faujdar* of Hissar and at the head of a large army marched

towards Munak. Ala Singh was also prepared to meet the enemy in open field. He, therefore, at the head of a large force marched from Munak to meet the Bhatti army away from his territory. Both the armies met at village Khudal, midway between Buddhlada and Munak. It was a fiercely contested battle in which Mohammad Amin Khan lost the day. He had to flee with great losses.⁷

The battle of Khudal constitutes a landmark in the territorial acquisition of Ala Singh. A very large tract of land was added to his dominion along with the following villages

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| (i) Bahadurpur | (ii) Khudal | (iii) Akbarpur |
| (iv) Shiekhpur Khudal | (v) Jalura | (vi) Bareta |
| (viii) Mander ⁸ | | |

The battle of Khudal was the first serious trial of strength between Ala Singh and the combined forces of the Bhatti chiefs including the *Faujdar* of Hissar. This made it clear that the Sikh chieftain was more than a match for Mohammad Amin Khan. It made the Bhatti chief fully realise that it was difficult for him to defeat his adversary single-handed. Henceforth we find him struggling very hard to find allies and enlisting help against Ala Singh. But the political upheaval in the Cis-Sutlej territory postponed the armed conflict with the rising Sikh chief.

In the next three years (1755-1758 A.D.) the territory south of the Sutlej had a very uneasy time. Within this short period there rose different political powers of diverse nature. In 1755 A.D.⁹ the territory was invaded by Qutab Shah¹⁰, the Collector of Saharanpur district. He defeated Sadiq Beg, who was the *Faujdar* of Sirhind.¹¹ Sadiq Beg took refuge with Adina Beg, the *Faujdar* of Jullundur Doab. Qutab Shah also invaded the Jullundur Doab by crossing the Sutlej. The *Faujdar* of Jullundur Doab fought a defensive war, in which Qutab

Shah was defeated.¹² Jamal Khan of Maler Kotla was killed in the battle as an ally of Qutab Shah. As a result of his victory Adina Beg occupied the Sirhind territory upto Thanesar, Mustfabad, Kohram and Mansurpur.¹³ Ala Singh wisely observed perfect neutrality in the armed conflict between Adina Beg and Qutab Shah and saved his territory from destruction. But Adina Beg's occupation of Cis-Sutlej territory was not to last long.

In 1756 the Punjab was again invaded by Ahmad Shah Abdali.¹⁴ This time the Afghan Emperor forcibly annexed the territories of the Punjab and Sirhind and left India in 1757 after making the following arrangements of his Indian dominion:-

1. The Afghan Emperor appointed his son Timur Shah as the governor of Lahore and Jahan Khan as his *Wazir*.
2. Abdul Samad Khan, a Mohammadzai Pathan of Peshawar, was appointed governor of the territory south of the river Sutlej, i.e., governor of Sirhind.¹⁵

The conquest of Sirhind territory by the Afghan Emperor and his appointment of the governor of Sirhind transferred Ala Singh's territory to the Indian dominion of Ahmad Shah Abdali. The appointment of the Abdali governor also affected the Bhatti rivalry with Ala Singh. Mohammad Amin Khan who had been defeated in the battle of Khudal was smarting under the insult and Ala Singh's successful campaigns against the Bhattis rankled in his eyes. In order to wreak his long-standing revenge against the Sikh chief, he was anxious to establish relationship with the new governor. He, therefore, according to the custom of the time, gave his daughter in matrimonial alliance to the Pathan governor and thus after cementing his relationship he persuaded him to suppress the power of the rising Sikh chief.¹⁶

The immediate cause of the armed conflict was provided by the flight of Lachhami Narain¹⁷ the Diwan of Abdul Samad Khan. Owing to some differences the Diwan quarrelled with his master. He fled to Sanaur and took shelter with Gurbaksh Singh Kaleke, Ala Singh's officer in the territory. The governor of Sirhind was already on the lookout to measure strength with Ala Singh. He, therefore, marched out with his forces to punish him for giving protection to his fugitive. Ala Singh was prepared to meet the enemy. He too moved his forces to Sanaur. Later Lachhami Narain was evacuated from Sanaur to Patiala. But considering the mud fort of Patiala insecure Ala Singh shifted to the fort of Dodan. Abdul Samad Khan was in hot pursuit and he besieged the fort. The besieged proved stronger. They sallied out and forced back the besiegers. The desultory warfare continued for some time.¹⁸ Acting upon the maxim that discretion is better part of valour, Ala Singh invited the Marathas¹⁹ to invade Sirhind. This clever move had the desired effect. When Abdul Samad Khan received the report about the Maratha advance towards Sirhind, he immediately retired to his headquarters postponing his fight with the Sikh chieftain to some favourable time.

Abdul Samad Khan entrenched himself in the fort. But he could not check the advance of the Marathas. Sirhind was sacked. He was arrested and taken to Lahore as prisoner in the Maratha camp.²⁰

When Abdul Samad Khan was busy in his war against Ala Singh, Mohammad Amin Khan struggled hard to enlist the support of Prince Ali Gohar against Ala Singh. Prince Ali Gohar visited the Baluch settlement at Jhajar and later on he advanced towards Hissar. The Bhatti chief met him there and solicited his help against his powerful opponent. But the Prince was being hotly pursued by Wazir Imad and he had to retreat towards Rewari and start his return journey towards Delhi.²¹

He could do nothing. Hence Mohd. Amin Khan's efforts ended in smoke.

In order to chase away Prince Ali Gohar, the Wazir (Ghazi-ud-din Imad) led an expedition to Rewari and Hissar region dragging the sick Emperor with him. Prince Ali Gohar had retreated towards Delhi but the Wazir (Imad) led the Imperial forces to the territory of Mohammad Amin Khan because the latter had helped Prince Ali Gohar, the enemy of the Wazir.²² The Bhatti chief fortified himself in the fort of Bhatner. The Imperial troops besieged the fort. But the condition of the besiegers was much worse than that of the besieged. There was a great scarcity of food and water in the Imperial camp. Every day the Bhattis sallied out from the fort and plundered the men who went out from Wazir's camp. At this critical time, Ala Singh approached the Wazir. His political sagacity suggested it to him to ally himself with Imad (Wazir) in order to defeat his sworn enemy Mohammad Amin Khan Bhatti. Ala Singh, therefore, helped the Wazir by supplying food grain to the Imperial forces. Later on the Wazir (Imad) and Alamgir (the Emperor) retired to Delhi.²³

Politically Ala Singh's help to the Wazir and Emperor Alamgir Sani was a counter move to the possible alliance of Prince Ali Gohar with Mohammad Amin Khan. Moreover Ala Singh with great foresight helped the Imperial forces away from his own territory and thus saved his principality from the Imperial army's loot and plunder, which were very common in those days. Besides this by rendering help to the Imperial forces against Mohammad Amin Khan he impressed upon his Bhatti enemy that he was prepared to measure strength with him too.

Soon after this incident, Abdul Samad Khan, the former *Faujdar* of Sirhind who had been arrested after the fall of Sirhind effected his escape from the Maratha Camp. He joined

his old ally Mohammad Amin Khan. Encouraged by his successful exploits²⁴ against the Imperial army and after having secured the alliance of Abdul Samad Khan, the Bhatti Chief renewed his struggle against Ala Singh. About twenty thousand Rohillas, Bhattis and Pachadas²⁵ were collected. This huge army marched towards Ala Singh's territory. The Bhatti hordes gushed out from Fatehabad and moved towards Jamalpur, which was easily conquered. Then they reached the outskirts of Tohana, which was also ravaged.²⁶ Ala Singh on the other hand was not unaware of the impending danger. He had made full preparations to meet the Bhattis on the field. On the approach of the enemy near Ala Singh's territory, the Sikh forces marched out from Munak. The two armies met face to face at the village Rampura near modern Akalgarh. For the first two days there were minor skirmishes. On the third day Ala Singh led a night attack, as a result of which the Bhatti forces fell into confusion and took to flight. Mohammad Amin and Abdul Samad Khan were defeated with great loss of men and material. The battle proved to be a decisive one and after this the Bhattis did not dare encroach upon the territory of Ala Singh.

The battle of Rampur is a great landmark in the career of Ala Singh as it decided many issues. It established the control of Ala Singh over the disputed areas. After the battle of Khudal there was a rift between the two parties of zamindars of Jamalpur. One party wanted to accept the overlordship of Ala Singh, while the other party led by Ramzan Ullah Khan Sheikh wanted to establish the control of Mohammad Amin Khan. After the battle of Rampur, Ala Singh's control was established over Jamalpur and its surrounding villages.²⁷

His victory in the field of Rampur brought him many territorial acquisitions. The *Tappas*²⁸ of Dharsul and Kheri which consisted of sixteen villages each were annexed to Ala

Singh's territory and their control was bestowed upon Hira Singh and Beka Singh Sekhon. Ala Singh also conquered Narwana Kalwan, Dharaundi, Belrakhan, Kharl, Peepal Theh, Nanaudhi and Batumra.²⁹ In order to consolidate his newly acquired possessions Ala Singh extended the fort of Dharsul and repaired the fort of Shakarpura.³⁰

The battle of Rampur brought for Ala Singh the era of sovereignty. Previously Ala Singh did not own any big fort. He had only conquered villages, resettled land and consolidated his possessions by building mud forts there. After the battle of Rampur, Ala Singh occupied the Sunam fort, a fort which enabled him to claim himself the position of a big chief.

The grand victory brought Ala Singh immense glory, prestige, power and numerous territorial acquisitions.

References

1. *Kaifiat-i-Lakhnau Sahib* quoted by Karam Singh, *Baba Ala Singh* (Gurmukhi) p. 159.
2. *Panth Parkash*, -Rattan Singh, p. 220.
3. *Tarikh-i-Patala*, p. 53.
Boundary Dispute Correspondence Vol. I, Rad-Jawab, p. 643.
4. *Statement of Ghulam Farid Khan of Tohana, dated August 11, 1820*.
Boundary Dispute Correspondence Vol. I.
5. *Statement of Karam Ali*. *Boundary Dispute Correspondence Vol. I*, p. 132.
6. *Statement of Ghulam Farid Khan*. *Boundary Dispute Correspondence Vol. I*, p. 31. According to S.N. Bannerji—"Conquest of Hissar" (*Patiala Post* July, 1945) Tohana and Jamalpur were leased out to Ala Singh for two years and later on Nawab of Farrukh Nagar gave these two Parganas on payment of ninety thousand rupees to Ala Singh. But both of the parties (Chiefs of Patiala and East India Company) in *Boundary Dispute Correspondence* have agreed that Tohana and Jamalpur were first conquered by Bhai Gurbaksh Singh (after the conquest of Boha and Buddhlada) and subsequently annexed to Ala Singh's territory. For more details vide *Boundary Dispute Correspondence Vol. I*.
7. *Tarikh-i-Phulkian wa Maharaj Klan*, MS.
Tarikh-i-Patala, p. 53.

8. *Halat-i-Muqaddima Nafi* quoted by Karam Singh, p. 165.

9. "On 28th Jamadi-ul-Sani, (11th April 1755) battle was fought. Qutab Khan and other Sardars were slain. Adina Beg gained victory."

Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani, translated by J S Sarker, p. 24,

"Qutab Shah Rohilla in year 1812 B.K. (1755 A.D.) advanced with formidable army to subdue that country."

Ahwai-i-Adina Beg Khan

Karam Singh in *Baba Ala Singh* had stated that Qutab Shah invaded Sirhind territory after the Maratha occupation of the Panjab, which does not appear to be correct.

10. Qutab Shah was a collector in Saharanpur District. Imad, the wazir, confiscated his villages and gave them to the Marathas. Qutab Shah was greatly enraged and he along with his soldiers crossed the river Jumna and began to plunder. Imad sent some troops to suppress the rebellion but they were defeated and Qutab Shah successfully marched towards Sirhind.

11. The Afghan soldiers of Sadiq joined Qutab Shah.

Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani, p. 23.

12. *Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani*, p. 25.

13. *Ibid.*

14. The important reasons for this invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali were :-

(i) Mughlani Begum invited Ahmad Shah Abdali and promised him huge wealth.

(ii) Almagir II invited Ahmad Shah Abdali because of his virtual confinement by his Wazir.

Shah Aulum by W Francklin, p. 5.

15. *Khalsa Namah*, p. 39.

Tahmas Namah, p. 66.

16. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 84.

17. Diwan Lachhmi Narain was an inhabitant of Jullundur Doab and was serving as Diwan (Treasurer) of the governor of Sirhind. He proved to be a sinister figure. He served three successive governors—Abdul Samad Khan, Sadiq Beg Khan and Zain Khan. In the beginning he had very cordial relations with Ala Singh. But later on he poisoned the ears of the Afghan Emperor against Ala Singh just after the bloody battle of Kup, *Ghullughara*.

18. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 51.

19. Vide the chapter "Relations with the Marathas."

20. "Raghnath Rao has gone to Sirhind. He attacked it and now it is in his

possession. Sardars Samant Khan (Abdul Samad Khan) and Jangbaz Khan, who were in the city, were wounded. They had been escorted to this place and after presentation of their robes and ornaments by them Raghunath Rao had ordered them to be by his side."

Selection from Peshwa Daftar Vol. 27, letter No. 220.

21. *Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani*, p. 34.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

23. *Ibid.*

24. One night the Bhattis made a night attack on the Imperial camp; many were slain and wounded, and much property was carried off.

Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani.

25. *Pachadas* were a sub-clan and were termed as Bhattis because they had embraced Islam.

Sirsa Settlement Report, p. 29.

26. *Tazakira-i-Khandan-i-Raja ha-i-Phulkian.*

Tarikh-i-Patiala, p. 54.

27. *Statement of Surtia, Boundary Dispute Correspondence Vol. 4.*

28. *Tappa* was a sub-division of *Pargana*. The villages included in *Tappa* lay within a ring fence and the boundaries of *Tappas* followed closely the distribution of tribes.

Rohtak District Land Revenue Settlement Report, p. 30.

29. *Halat-i-Muqaddima Nali*—quoted by Karam Singh.

30. *ibid.*

RELATIONS WITH THE MARATHAS (1758-1761 A.D.)

Friendship is a sheltering tree.

Coleridge

Ala Singh had very close contacts with the Marathas. No Sikh Chief has been so frequently mentioned in the Marathi records (especially of the Abdali period) as Ala (Singh) Jat. The scrutiny of some of the Marathi letters leads us to conclude that Ala Singh was a close friend and ally of the Marathas and had helped them through thick and thin. Long before the Maratha occupation of the Punjab (May 1758), Ala Singh was known to the Marathas as is clear from the Marathi letter dated March-April 1757, the translation of which is given below:-

"From Vasudeva Dikshita to Peshwa. Nagar Mal the representative of Salabat Jang at Delhi has despatched a pair of messengers that reached Aurangabad after eighteen days and started from Salabat Jang's Camp. Valji, the chief messenger, orally gave out the news brought by the pair; while the Pathan's son, (Timur, son of Ahmad Shah Abdali) was carrying away, the treasure, Ala Jat, the resident of Sirhind (a place about two hundred miles from Delhi) and the Sikhs of the sect of Nanak united together and overpowered the Pathan's son by blocking his way. They completely snatched away his treasure; again attacked and plundered him at Maler Kotla."¹

The friendship of Ala Singh with the Marathas can be traced back to his invitation to the Marathas to expel the Afghans from his country. When Ala Singh was besieged by

Abdul Samad Khan, the *Faujdar* of Sirhind, Ala Singh invited the Marathas² to invade the Cis-Sutlej territory. His deep understanding of the political game suggested him that the march of Marathas to his country would react favourably because in the case of Maratha occupation of territory he would be free from Abdul Samad Khan, who bore great enmity towards him. The invitation of Ala Singh had the desired effect. The Marathas, who had gained a brilliant victory over Najib³ by their conquest of Delhi, were already thinking of extending their sway to the North. They marched out for the conquest of Punjab.

The Maratha invasion⁴ of the Punjab began in the month of January 1758 and the Maratha army marched towards Sirhind. The close approach of the Marathas greatly alarmed Abdul Samad Khan, who was at that time besieging Ala Singh. He speedily raised the siege and hurried to Sirhind, where he set himself to repairing the fort and digging defensive trenches.

Ala Singh played a significant part in the Maratha conquest of Sirhind. He not only invited the Marathas to his country but also sent his representative, Ladha Mal and Biram Dhillon, to receive them on his behalf.⁵ The sack of Sirhind, the accursed city which had witnessed the ghastly murder of the Tenth Guru's sons, was considered to be the sacred duty of the Sikhs. Knowing this, Adina Beg invited the Sikhs for the expedition. The fort of Sirhind was easily captured by the Sikhs and the town was plundered. The Marathas reached on the second day of the conquest.⁶ On the arrival of the Marathas, the Sikhs mostly retired, leaving the town in the hands of the Marathas. The town was looted and plundered for full eight days.⁷

The Maratha occupation of the Punjab and the Cis-Sutlej territory was not to be tolerated by the Afghan Emperor. It was a great blow to his power and prestige. As soon as he

was free from his western frontier, he led his legions across the Indus. Sambha Ji finding himself too weak to confront the Afghans fell back from Lahore, which was occupied by Jehan Khan.⁸ The officers appointed by the Marathas like Sadiq Beg Khan, the *Faujdar* of Sirhind, and Adina Beg's widow and son fled away from their places to Delhi at the report of the advance of the Afghans. Abdali entered Sirhind in November 1759 A.D.⁹

The Marathas had once conquered the territory uptil Indus and it was not considered advisable to leave these possessions without a fair trial of strength. The Peshwa, therefore, sent Sadashive Bhau with a large Maratha force to check the advance of Abdali and to reconquer the lost Maratha dominions in the North. After conquering Delhi, Sadashive Bhau marched towards Kunjpura¹⁰ a Yusufzai Afghan settlement under Nijabat Khan and conquered it securing immense booty.

The Maratha occupation of Kunjpura marks the highest triumph of Maratha power during their armed conflict against Abdali. It brought the Marathas nearer to the territory of Ala Singh, who was to gain prominence in Maratha politics. Moreover the Maratha conquest of Kunjpura is significant for Ala Singh in another way. It resulted in the death of Abdul Samad Khan, a powerful enemy of Ala Singh. Had he not met his death during the Maratha-Abdali campaign, he would have proved most dangerous to Ala Singh and his territories after the victory of his patron, Ahmad Shah Abdali. The death of Abdul Samad Khan relieved Ala Singh of one of the greatest dangers to his establishment and independence.

After the Maratha conquest of Kunjpura, the Marathas brought Ala Singh into great prominence. It had many political reasons. Despite Sadashive Bhau's personal efforts, Shuja-ud-daula had joined Najib Khan Rohilla.¹¹ Suraj Mal Jat had also deserted them after their occupation of Delhi.¹² Sadashive Bhau,

therefore, took special measures to make political alliance with Ala Singh, the most important chieftain of the territory. He marched towards Sirhind. His plan of action was to capture Sirhind (as had been done in Raghunath's campaign in March 1758), to join Ala Singh and other zimindars of the Cis-Sutlej territory and to arouse them against Ahmad Shah Abdali as a first step towards driving the foreign invader out of the Punjab. This policy of national defence against the foreigner is clearly stated in the Marathi letter, the English rendering of which runs as follows :-

"From thither (the lines preceding this give details about the battle of Kunjpura), he (Bhau) went a stage further with a view to subjugating the Province of Sirhind by marching via Kurukshetra and refreshed the army after persuading the zimindars, Sikhs and Jats of the Province, to join him."¹³

But shrewd Ahmad Shah Abdali did not allow this plan of Sadashive Bhau to materialise. The Maratha conquest of Kunjpura greatly enraged him. He crossed the Jumna at Bagpat Ghat and came to Sonapat, thus cutting Maratha communications with Delhi and South. In order to meet the enemy, Bhau immediately turned back and arrived at Panipat. Bhau, however, did not abandon the idea of making a coalition with Ala Singh and deputed Laxman Appaji Ekbote, a Maratha Envoy, to Ala Singh's territory. He stayed with Ala Singh as is clear from his following Marathi letter addressed to the Peshwa:¹⁴

"I was deputed by Bhau to Sirhind¹⁵ When misfortune fell on our army, I approached Ala Singh Jat, who, out of regard for your honour, gave me shelter."

Though Sadashive Bhau could not meet Ala Singh personally, yet Ala Singh by this time had risen to such eminence that the Peshwa had to open correspondence with him. The Peshwa himself wrote letters to Ala Singh and the

latter also replied as is clear from the following translation of the Marathi letter addressed to the Peshwa by Laxman Appaji Ekbote :-

"Your honour had sent some letters to Ala Singh Jat which have been replied to by the Jat. All the details will be known from them."¹⁶

As there had developed friendly relationship between Ala Singh and the Marathas, it was not considered proper by the former to remain aloof at the most critical hour of Maratha history. The Marathas suffered from an acute shortage of foodgrains.¹⁷ The Afghan Emperor adopted special measures to complete the economic blockade of the Maratha camp. Every night a body of five thousand Durrani horsemen advanced as near as they could and remained there all the night keeping watch against the entry of food grains into the Maratha Camp. Two other bodies of the same strength made half circles around the Maratha encampment, one to the right, one to the left. These night patrols, each at least five thousand horsemen strong, mounted on powerful Turkey horses and commanded by tested cavalry leaders like Shah Pasand Khan and Jehan Khan cut off every provision convoy that attempted to steal into the Maratha Camp. The Maratha parties who came out under cover of darkness in order to get fodder and firewood were also checked and cut off from their camp.¹⁸ This complete economic blockade of the Maratha Camp led to starvation to such an extent that people began to make flour out of animal bones. Most of the horses died for want of fodder.¹⁹

In this precarious condition, Ala Singh undertook to help the Marathas by sending them provisions and foodgrains.²⁰ Apparently, the Marathas were more in numbers and they had enough ammunition and it is agreed on all hands that their food shortage and financial stringency brought about their ruin. Ala Singh tried to help them to solve their food crisis by

sending to the Maratha Camp convoys of food grains. When Abdal came to know this, he sent a punitive expedition and stopped provisions supplied by Ala Singh. This, however, could not stop Ala Singh's loyalty to the Marathas. He continued to help them even in the darkest hour of their fate. After the Maratha defeat in the fateful battle of Panipat, Ala Singh gave protection to many Maratha fugitives who came to take shelter in his territory as Laxman Appaji Ekbote testifies in his letter to the Peshwa :-

"I was deputed by Bhau to Sirhind along with Lakshmi Narain. When misfortune befell our army, Lakshmi Narain being a Hindustani secured a place for himself. With 50 or 60 Maratha *sowars*, I was left in the lurch. There was no place at all. A heavy rush followed. So I approached Ala Singh Jat, who out of regard for your honour gave me shelter. Up to now I am with the Jat Sardar."²¹

Ala Singh proved to be the greatest ally of the Marathas in the Punjab. He invited them to his country and helped them in their conquest of Sirhind. In the mutual relationship, Ala Singh rose to such an eminence that the Peshwa opened correspondence with him.

He helped the Marathas with foodgrains at great risk and at a time when the Marathas were faced the greatest food crisis. Even after the Maratha disaster he gave shelter to the Maratha fugitives. In short, Ala Singh proved to be a great friend of the Marathas not only at the time of their victory at Sirhind but also at the time of their disaster in the fateful battle of Panipat.

References

1. *Selection from Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 21, letter No. 116.*
2. *Kagzi-i-Bhagwant Rai* quoted by Karam Singh in *Baba Ala Singh* (Gurmukhi) pp. 174-75. It is stated there that when Raghu nath Rao reached Sarai Yanjara he sent for the *wakils* of Ala Singh. When Lachha Mal, Ala

Singh's *vakil* came to attend Raghunath Rao the latter took him aside and asked Latha Mal why Ala Singh had not come to receive them and told him that they had been invited by him.

3. In August 1757 after the departure of Ahmad Shah Abdali to his country, the politics of Delhi had a turn in which Marathas played an important part. The Afghan Emperor before his departure appointed Najib, the Commander-in-Chief of the army, and he had grown all powerful. The *Wazir* of Almgir II, being jealous of his power, invited the Marathas to support his authority. Consequently Delhi was conquered by the Marathas and their brilliant success led them to further conquest of the Punjab.
4. There was another cause for Maratha march towards Sirhind. When the month of Jamadi-ul-Awal began (January 11, 1758), news came that Malhar's family went for the bath at Thanesar and other places, the soldiers of Abdul Samad Khan, Governor of Sirhind, besieged them at Shahabad; in the battle many Afghans were slain and wounded; the Marathas captured many horses.

Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani, p. 131.

5. Letter of Latha Mal and Bika Singh quoted by Karam Singh.
- 6.

سردار مال و بیک سنگھ کی طرف سے
 دکن امیر و دستگیر کرد

Shah Alam Namah by Ghulam Ali, p. 56.

ਦੀਨਾ ਤੇਲ ਸਦੀਏ ਭਿਜਾਏ ਸੇ ਸਿੰਘਨ ਕੇ ਲੇਏ ਅਧੇ।....
 ਜਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਟਪ ਕਰ ਅੰਦਰ ਢਠੇ। ਗਿਲੇ ਰਹੇ ਨ ਅਧੇ ਖਠੇ।
 ਜੇ ਕੇ ਅਧੇ ਰੁ ਲੀਏ ਮਾਰ। ਫਿਰ ਬਿਧਿ ਦੁਲਾਈ ਗਏ ਰੁ ਰਾਹ.....।
 ਦੂਜੇ ਲਿਨ ਮਰਹਟੇ ਲੁਟ ਪਾਏ ਫੇਰ ਚੁਭਰਏ ਸਭ ਕਥ ਅਧੇ।

Panth Parkash Rattan Singh, p. 345.

7. *Tazakira-i-Imadul Mulk*, MS (Persian), p. 328.

The Marathas and Sikhs so thoroughly looted the inhabitants of Sirhind high and low, that none other male or female had a cloth left on his or her person. pulling houses down they carried off timber and dug off floors.

Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani, p. 75.

8. *A New History of the Marathas*, p. 403.
9. *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 81.
10. Nijabat-i-Khan after serving in the Imperial forces secured for himself a considerable tract of fertile land along with an arm of the Jumna as it flowed in a channel now dry, known as the Purnu. He plundered the Bazidpur villages in the Badavli *Pargna* of Sarkar Saharanpur and built for himself

in the Jumna marshes a strong tower which he named *Kanjipura*. Heron's Nest. Kanjipura, just in the middle of Delhi and Sirhind, was regarded as a post of strategical importance, covering the Bagh ferry on the road from Saharanpur to Delhi, and commanding the Imperial bridge over the canal between Kamal and the fortified Sarai at Gharunda, in the direction of Panipat.

Chiefs and Families of Note. p. 170.

11. *New History of the Marathas Vol. II*, p. 419.

12. *Ibid.* p. 419.

"As soon as Delhi was captured Suraj Mal demanded that he should be put in charge of its Government. Thus Bhau Sahib for the obvious reasons could not do."

13. *Selection from Peshwa Daftar* by S.G. Sardesai Vol. No. 21 letter No. 197.

14. As soon as Bhau Sahib heard this news he fell back and by a march arrived at Panipat.

Selection from Peshwa Daftar Vol. 21, letter No. 262.

15. *Selection from Peshwa Daftar Vol. 27 letter No. 262.*

16. Unfortunately the full correspondence, its nature, the subject and contents are not traceable. The Marathas were locked in at Panipat. According to G.S. Sardesai, the great Marathi historian, Ahmad Shah Abdali intercepted the Maratha correspondence with the result that no Marathi letters are traceable two months preceding the major action of the battle of Panipat (14 Jan. 1761).

17. *Selection from the Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 27, letter No. 258 (Sept. 1760).*

18. *Fall of Mughal Empire Vol. II*, p. 308.

"Because of Abdali affairs all roads are closed."

S.P.D. Vol. 27, letter No. 259.

19. *Tarikh-i-Ahmad MS.*, pp. 36-37.

گو تا پناہ ہر طرف داور کو سایہ شہدہ دریدہ غلاماں خاں اوج
جہات مسدود ساختہ گھریت لاہور پس پشت سر پہ کہ اناں طرف
آلا باٹ از شاہیر مر زبان زوال سر نہ دست خدے فرستاد بریں ہم
فتنا یان کاہر یانے

20. *Khatana-i-Amira*, p. 107.

دو مہول دھبہ تلخ بنگر گاہ مرہٹہ ان جمیع جہات منقطع شد۔ مگر آلا جاٹ
 جو چہرہ انہ نہ چند اراں سر بند بود فی الجملہ وجہ منیت سرانجام دادہ نہ سیت
 پشت لکڑی نرہ بجاہ میفرستاد۔

Tarikh-i-Bhau wa Janko MS., p. 41.

مگر طرہ لاہور کہ پشت لکڑی مرہٹہ گورد آں صحت آلا جاٹ کہ انہ جملہ
 مرز باہاں مدھون انواح سر بند است تلخ میفرستاد و رائیلاں ہلاں ہم قابو
 یافتہ کے رہنمندی۔

Sayar-ul-Mutakharin; p. 912.

21. *Selection from Peshwa Daftar Vol. 27 letter No. 262.*

LAST PHASE : SOVEREIGNTY—1761-1765

Glory is the fair child of peril.

Smollett

After the battle of Panipat (January 1761) Ala Singh entered a very critical and stormy career of his life. Within a short time of three years he was arrested twice by Ahmad Shah Abdali. Once the latter ordered his long hair—the symbol and stamp of Khalsa brotherhood to be cut off. Another time he was dubbed as a traitor who had committed treason by making obeisance to the enemy of the Sikhs and was threatened with war by the Khalsa. But Ala Singh was successful in stemming the tide of misfortune, which proved for him a blessing in disguise and ultimately led to the establishment of the Patiala *Raj*.

Ala Singh's help with provisions to the starving Marathas was opposed by the Afghan Emperor, during the battle of Panipat. Ahmad Shah Abdali, therefore, while returning to his own country plundered Barnala, Ala Singh's chief town. At that critical time Ala Singh had retired to Munak¹, a border town in the south of his territory. His wife Fateh Kaur and her grandson Amar Singh were there. They also evacuated to some safe place on the eve of Abdali invasion. It was the most critical time as the estate of Ala Singh was at the mercy of the victor of Panipat. During this crisis Fateh Kaur acted very wisely. She deputed Biram Dhillon, Bhola Singh, Kahna Mal and Kashmiri to start negotiations with the Afghan invader. The deputationists approached Shah Wali Khan, the *Wazir* of the Shah and were successful in concluding peace. It was decided that Ala Singh should present personally four lakhs of

rupees as tribute³. It was the first time that the Sikh chief appeared before the Afghan Emperor. Ala Singh's manly deportment greatly impressed the Shah. At the same time his heroic deeds reminded the Shah of the daredevil spirit and pluck with which he had supplied foodgrains to the Maratha camp. Now the Afghan Emperor adopted the policy of reconciliation with Ala Singh as he wanted to win him over to his side⁴. He, therefore, issued a *firman* on March 29, 1761⁴ to the newly-appointed governor of Sirhind, Zain Khan, to treat Ala Singh as an independent chief and to consider his enemies as enemies and his friends as friends. Mir Taqi was appointed on behalf of the Shah to receive the tribute due from Ala Singh. Ala Singh was honoured with a robe of honour and was confirmed with 726 villages as his possessions with the following details :-

Name of Pargana	No. of villages
1. Pargana Sunam along its town	224
2. Pargana Samana	266
" Sirhind	52
" Sanaur	89
" Chhat	8
" Masigan	17
" Kohram	6
" Banur	37
" Mansurpur	23
	■
	726 ⁵

The robe of honour from the victor of Panipat and his rescript of independence helped Ala Singh a lot to stabilize his power.

As soon as Abdali left India, the *Khalsa Dal* hovered round Ala Singh to punish him for his so-called treachery and treason in receiving honours from the enemy of the Sikhs. They declared that he had betrayed them and the robe of honour was the price of his treachery. Ala Singh explained to the Sikhs that he had either to fight against the victor of Panipat and suffer annihilation at his hands or to obey his order. The former course would have ended the Sikh supremacy in the Cis-Sutlej territory. He, therefore, adopted the second course of paying tribute and accepting the robe of honour. It was however, with the help of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia⁶, the founder of Kapurthala state, Ala Singh was successful in explaining to the Sikhs that his policy towards the Afghan Emperor was due to political expediency. His previous services to the Sikhs stood him in good stead and the matter was smoothened over.⁷ He assured the *Dal* of his whole-hearted cooperation as he had done before.

Soon after the departure of Abdali, the situation grew worse in the Cis-Sutlej territory. The Sikh guerillas exacted tribute from the neighbourhood of Sirhind, and Zain Khan, the Afghan governor found himself helpless. Once Lakshami Narain, the Dewan of Sirhind Governor, was on his tour of revenue collection; he was attacked by the Sikh desperados and was deprived of his collections. Such was the terror struck in the heart of Zain Khan and his Dewan that they remained confined to their fort.⁸ The situation grew equally worse in the Lahore province. Khwaja Obed, the Abdali Governor of Lahore, was defeated and killed by Charat Singh⁹, the grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The reports of these happenings inflamed Ahmad Shah Abdali, who at once led his legions across the Attock to punish the audacious Sikhs.

The Sikhs had gone towards Sirhind and made encampment at village Kup when Abdali reached Lahore.

With rapid marches of light cavalry he covered the whole distance from Lahore to Kup within two days and reached Kup on February 5, 1762,¹⁰ where about one lakh of Sikhs, men, women and children were encamped. The Sikhs were taken by surprise. The strategy was to overwhelm the Sikhs and to wipe them out. But the Sikhs stubbornly frustrated his designs. They stood for a while, engaged the enemy and then fled ahead. The enemy was in hot pursuit. The pursuer and pursued fought on for twelve *Kos* and they were anxious to quench their thirst. After half a day's severe fighting they saw a big pond of water at village Qutab Bahmini. The clash and clang of swords stopped for a while and they had their fill of water. Abdali pursued the Sikhs upto Barnala where he called halt because his army was enervated and exhausted. The popular estimate of the loss of men on the side of Sikhs is 12,000 to 15,000 men and this battle is known as *Ghallughara*¹¹ in the history of the Sikhs.

Ala Singh's role in *Ghallughara*, the bloody carnage of the Sikhs, can be determined from the fact that Sekhu Singh Hambalka, Ala Singh's *Vakil*, was with the Sikhs at the encirclement of the Sikhs by Abdali at village Kup. Sekhu Singh and Sangu Singh were appointed to escort women and children to Barnala, Ala Singh's capital.¹² It was not a mere chance that women and children were being escorted to Barnala, but Ala Singh's territory particularly, Thikriwala (near Barnala), and Barnala were most familiar places where they used to take shelter off and on. This fact is further confirmed by the contemporary author of *Khazana-i-Amara* who particularly has written that on the arrival of Ahmed Shah at Lahore, the news came "that two lakhs of the *Khalsa* had gathered in the neighbourhood of Sirhind and near the territory of Ala Singh Jat."¹³

When Ahmad Shah Abdali reached Barnala, Ala Singh

had wisely slipped away. The absence of the Sikh chieftain and his non-payment of tribute gave opportunity to Lakshmi Narain, the *Dewan* of the Afghan Governor, to poison the ears of the Shah against Ala Singh. He persuaded the Shah to arrest Ala Singh and assured him a big ransom.¹⁴ Ala Singh was, therefore, arrested. The Afghan Emperor, overwhelmed by the idea of *Jehad* against the Sikhs, ordered that Ala Singh's long hair should be cropped.

To a Sikh like Ala Singh, who had taken *Pahul*, long hair were the symbol and stamp of the tenth Guru. According to Sikh conventions, it was better to lay down one's life as so many Sikh martyrs had done before rather than to let the enemy desecrate the sacred symbol of long hair. At that critical juncture Ala Singh like all the great men of different ages, did not lose his presence of mind and outwitted Ahmad Shah Abdali. Ahmad Yadgar has described their dialogue in the following words :-

"Abdali :— (Long) Hair of the head of Ala Singh may be cut. -

Ala Singh :— I am prepared to pay the cost of the hair of my head. Shah may sell them.

Abdali :— How much are you prepared to pay for your hair?

Ala Singh :— I shall pay one lakh of rupees as the price of my hair.

Abdali :— Ala Singh may be allowed to retain his hair at the cost of one lakh and twenty five thousand rupees."¹⁵

Ala Singh's ready wit and his deep study of the greedy nature of the Afghan Emperor saved him from an insulting and degrading situation.

Later on Ala Singh saw the Emperor with Najib-ul-Daula, the "right hand man" of Abdali in India.¹⁶ The Shah realised five lakhs of rupees as tribute. He wanted more. Ala Singh was, therefore, taken to Lahore alongwith Shah's contingent where he was released.¹⁷

The *Ghallughara* was the greatest calamity for the Sikhs. In a single day more than twelve thousand Sikhs perished. Their holiest temple was razed to the ground. But trained in the school of adversity, the Khalsa were never dismayed. They considered that dross has been removed and the Khalsa had been purified.¹⁸ They decided more firmly and fanatically to wreak vengeance on Zain Khan, who had been most active in the bloody carnage of the Sikhs.

The Sikhs exacted tribute from the neighbouring territories of Sirhind and caused a great financial crisis for Zain Khan, the Afghan governor of Sirhind. He could not pay salaries to his retainers, who became rebellious. This state of affairs heavily told upon his temper and he became cruel and resorted to the meanest methods of extorting money from the inhabitants of Sirhind and its surrounding villages. Tahmasap Khan¹⁹ (pen name was Miskin), one of the retainers of Zain Khan, who was with him in Sirhind, has graphically described his master's cruel exactions in the following words :-

"I found a change in the temper of Zain Khan who leaving aside the old practices and laws, sacked the villages for nothing. The grain which he collected in this way was distributed as one-fourth of their pay to the persons who demanded it. He collected money by unpleasant methods, which are far from being wise, and which bring ruin. I find that the town of Sirhind has been ruined and people are fleeing from Sirhind. In our presence Zain Khan sent orders to all ferries and posts to the effect that whosoever is wearing a cap is a deserter from the royal army and is fleeing to Shahjahanabad.

He should be killed and his baggage should be confiscated because all these cap-wearers are the servants of the Shah. In this way and by such orders he thought of extracting money from the travellers just for nothing."²⁰

Zain Khan could not check the growing chaos and confusion in his territory. He was compelled to invite the help of Ala Singh, who sent some of his men to help Zain Khan in the administration of his country.²¹ In this way Zain Khan pulled on for some time. But soon Ala Singh found his position untenable and he sent a message to Zain Khan intimating that the Sikhs did not act according to his advice and he (Zain Khan) could act as he liked.²²

Soon after this the *Buddha Dal* and the *Taruna Dal* decided to punish Zain Khan. Ala Singh joined the punitive expedition in order to prove that he was with the Sikhs and not with Abdali or his officials. The combined forces of the *Dals* marched towards Sirhind.

Zain Khan had gone to collect revenue from Kot Isa Khan from where he came towards Ambala and had encamped near Rajpura.²³ He had with him five thousand horsemen and five thousand footmen.²⁴ On the night of 13th January 1764, the Sirhind Governor tried to reach Sirhind and take shelter, within the Sirhind fort. But the *Dals* were fully aware of the strategy of Zain Khan and they blocked his way to Sirhind. Both armies stood face to face, fully harnessed during the whole of night as the Afghan Governor wanted to attempt his flight to Sirhind. On the morning of the 14th January, 1764²⁵ with the help of his artillery pieces Zain Khan advanced towards Sirhind. The Sikhs checked his advance and in the scuffle which ensued Zain Khan was killed. The death of Zain Khan caused great confusion in his army. All the supplies, treasury and artillery pieces fell into the hands of the Sikhs.²⁶ Sirhind was sacked and its inhabitants fled into different

directions. The town was made over to Bhai Buddha Singh, an old companion of Guru Gobind Singh.²⁷

The death of Zain Khan and the fall of Sirhind are the most important events in the history of the Cis-Sutlej territory. It brought an end to foreign rule in this tract of land and ushered an era of Sikh domination. Griffin writes :-

"The storm burst at last. The Sikhs of the *Majha* country of Lahore, Amritsar, Ferozepur combined their forces at Sirhind, routed and killed the Afghan governor, Zain Khan and pouring across Sutlej occupied the whole country to the Jamna without further opposition. It is enough to say that with few exceptions, the leading families of today are the direct descendants of the conquerors of Zain Khan."²⁸

Ala Singh being the most influential Sikh of the area, greatly benefitted by this victory of the Sikhs over Zain Khan.²⁹ The fall of Sirhind raised the prestige of Ala Singh in the eyes of other Sikhs because he had given full co-operation in their expedition against Sirhind. He derived great material gain too. In this fight he acquired the artillery of the Afghan Governor.³⁰ It greatly increased his military power. Moreover, the destruction of Sirhind led to the construction and foundation of Patiala, the present capital of the erstwhile Patiala East Punjab States Union, (Pepsu). The fall of Sirhind directly led to Sikh supremacy in the Cis-Sutlej territory and the establishment of Patiala *Raj*.

For the last fifty years Sirhind had been attacked by the Sikhs four times.³¹ The last time the city was utterly destroyed, and the population completely uprooted. It was, therefore, not considered advisable for the inhabitants to stay there any more. Most of them migrated to Ala Singh's territory and settled at Patiala. Even to this day a section of the population at Patiala is known as Sirhindis. In order to give a sense of security to the new settlers and strengthen his border town, Ala Singh

built a brick fort there.³² It greatly facilitated the town to become the capital of the State in the subsequent years. After founding the Patiala fort, Ala Singh began to collect toll tax from the main road, i.e. Grand Trunk Road, which ran from Delhi to Peshawar.³³

The fall of Sirhind destroyed the last vestige of the prestige of Afghan rule in Cis-Sutlej territory and increased the power and prestige of Ala Singh to such an extent that he started the mint, and struck his own coin. His coin, however, was not different from that of Ahmad Shah Abdali's coin (minted at Sirhind). Ala Singh's coin was particularly marked with *kalgi* or *sigrette* plume. Two of his gold coins have been discovered, one of which lies in the British Museum, London.³⁴

The last two years mark the most important period of Ala Singh's life. This period witnessed his power and prestige at their zenith. It was during this period that he was granted the insignia of royalty and recognized as the lawful governor of Sirhind territory. But he was not destined to enjoy the fruit of his lifelong struggle.

The fall of Sirhind, and the defeat and death of Zain Khan greatly perturbed Bhikhan Khan, the ruler of Maler Kotla. Like Zain Khan he had made common cause with the Afghan Emperor to exterminate the Sikhs in the bloody battle of Kup (*Ghallughara*) and so he apprehended that he might be the next victim of fate. The hereditary enmity between the House of Patiala and the House of Maler Kotla was also renewed when Amar Singh, the grandson of Ala Singh, and Bhikhan Khan³⁵ came face to face at village Kakra. Both were anxious to measure strength with each other. In the scuffle that ensued Bhikhan Khan was killed.³⁶ As a result of this victory a very fine sword of the Afghan chief fell into the hands of Amar Singh. The towns of Sherpur and Bhasaur were annexed to the territory of Ala Singh.³⁷

There had grown up a sort of friendship between Ala Singh and Najib-ud-Daula, the most prominent Rohilla leader. The latter helped the former at the most critical time. When after the bloody carnage of the Sikhs Ahmad Shah Abdali arrested Ala Singh, it was Najib-ud-Daula who had conducted Ala Singh to the presence of the Afghan Emperor.³⁸ Ever since that time Ala Singh had great regard for Najib.

Najib's help to Ala Singh was soon reciprocated. After the conquest of Sirhind, and the defeat and death of Zain Khan, the *Khalsa Dals* crossed the Jamna and began to exact tribute from Najib-ud-Daula's territory³⁹. Najib wanted to avoid any armed conflict with the Sikhs because he was making preparations to meet the attack of Jawahar Singh Jat, son of Suraj Mal, as his father had been killed by him. Najib could not fight on two fronts. He, therefore, asked for military aid from Ala Singh. To lend military aid to Najib at that time meant for Ala Singh open war with the *Khalsa Dals*. He, therefore, refused the request but promised to help Najib in another way. He exerted his influence to bring rapprochement between Najib and the Sikhs. Ala Singh was successful in his efforts. The Sikhs were persuaded by Ala Singh to leave the territory as Najib agreed to pay eighty thousand rupees to the Sikhs for *Karah Parshad*. Money was paid through Ala Singh and the *Khalsa Dals* retreated from Najib's territory.⁴⁰

On hearing of the Sikh conflict with Najib, Jawahar Singh invited the *Dals* to his side. The invitation was accepted. Jawahar Singh led the combined forces of the Jats, the Sikhs and the Marathas to invade Delhi in October 1764 A.D. Najib tried to evade the issue by making peace but with no success. At last Najib strengthened his garrison at Delhi. The military aid of Ala Singh was also invited, and he sent one thousand troops under Bhola Singh to fight on behalf of Najib⁴¹. But the Sikhs were not very serious in the affair, and as soon as

the Sikhs heard of the invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali, they retired towards the Punjab. Najib and Jawahar Singh concluded peace in 1765 A.D.

The news of the sack of Sirhind and of the defeat and death of Zain Khan, the Abdali *Faujdar* of Sirhind, could not keep the Afghan Emperor quiet. He called Nasir Khan Baloch for *Jehad* and led his forces towards the Punjab.

On his way to Lahore, the Abdali army was harassed by the roving bands of the Sikhs under Charat Singh Sukarchakia. After reaching Lahore, Abdali wanted to avenge his resentment against the Sikhs by killing them. But he could find no trace of the Sikhs. At last he marched to Amritsar. In the Akal Bunga there were only thirty Sikhs. Under Bhai Gurbaksh Singh they came out to fight with thirty thousand Afghans. According to Qazi Nur Mohammad, who accompanied this expedition of the Shah, they came forward fearlessly and fell fighting valiantly. The Harimandir Sahib (Golden Temple) was again pulled down. In the Jallandhar Doab the Shah's army was harassed by the roving bands of the Sikh desperados. But the Shah continued his advance along the hillside. After reaching Panjaur he took towards South and arrived at Kunjpura (near modern Karnal). Abdali here called his council to decide whether he should march to Delhi or retire to his own country. His generals decided to return to their country. Abdali had also received the news of Najib's coming to peaceful terms with his enemy Jawahar Singh. He, therefore, retreated from Kunjpura⁴² and on his return journey halted at Sirhind.

Abdali was greatly surprised to see the devastated condition of Sirhind. Qazi Nur Mohammad has graphically described the condition :

"The whole city lay in ruins; no man, not even a bird was to be seen there except the owl, though I roamed about

a great deal in the city. The shops of the bazar were there while the shopkeepers had left for the land of non-existence. The royal palaces of the city and its gardens, orchards and water lakes were all lying in ruins for want of care."⁴³

This scene of Sirhind, which was one of the most flourishing towns of Mughal India and the seat of Government of Abdali *Faujdar*, greatly disturbed Ahmad Shah Abdali and made him sore. In his zeal for the extirpation of the Sikhs, Abdali had done his best. In the great *Ghallughara* he had killed about 15,000 Sikhs in a single day. He had repeatedly pulled down their sacred temple and filled it with debris. But the Sikhs had never lost their spirits. They had recovered their power in an amazingly short period and had again acquired an upper hand over the Afghan king by killing the Abdali governor, Zain Khan. The dauntless spirit of the *Khalsa* was fully exhibited when Ahmad Shah's army was harassed at every step by the roving bands of the Sikhs. At last the ideal of Afghan genius and the victor of the brave Marathas was convinced of the invincibility of the Sikhs, 'the nations at arms' in open hostility. Now he resorted to the policy of 'divide et impera', i.e., to win to his side one section of the Sikhs by giving them power and thus causing a schism among them. He is said to have remarked, "It is bad for these *zamindars* to run away from me. I did not want any money and property from them. They should come in with whatsoever they can bring and have no fear." Qazi Nur Mohammad adds, "To say nothing of *zamindars*, even if the Sikhs undertook to be obedient to him, the Shah would forgive their past sins."⁴⁴

Through a messenger, Ala Singh was called to the presence of the Shah. When Ala Singh came, the Shah enquired of him how the city of Sirhind had devasted. He replied that Sirhind had been destroyed by the Sikhs. He also said that the Sikhs could never be exterminated and "if one Sikh died, two

still more revengeful ones came up to take his place in accordance with the blessings of their Guru."⁴³ The Shah had seen in his previous campaigns that he could not extirpate the Sikhs or compel them to submission. Now he wanted to win the Sikhs over through diplomacy. He asked Ala Singh to open negotiations with the Sikhs on the understanding that he would bestow the territory on the Sikhs provided they submitted to him (Ahmad Shah Abdali).

Ala Singh in compliance with the Shah's wishes sent Nanu Singh Grewal, his Vakil, to the *Dal Khalsa*. The Sikhs returned the Vakil with the following reply:

"The alliance of the Afghans and the Sikhs is just like the meeting of fire and gun-powder. Sovereignty cannot be begged. The Guru had bestowed upon us sovereignty and the *Khalsa* have achieved it by sacrificing their heads."⁴⁴

Ahmad Shah Abdali thus failed in his diplomatic move. He then tried to make the best out of the lost game. He did not want to repeat the blunder which he had committed in appointing Zain Khan as *Faujdar* of Sirhind. This time he wanted to appoint some local man to this post. Ala Singh was, therefore, appointed as the governor of Sirhind on the condition that he would pay three and a half lakhs of rupees to the Shah as annual tribute. He was honoured with the title of 'Maharaja', and granted the insignia of royalty, kettle drum and banner, as is clear from the following couplet of Qazi Nur Mohammad:

میرمن نادرشہنشاہ بہ مجید و کرم بہ بختیہ بخش از لطف طبع و علم

With great generosity and kindness, the Shah (Ahmad Shah Abdali) Allowed him (Ala Singh) to depart and out of his

benignity, he bestowed upon him the banner and drum (*Tablo-alam*)⁴⁷

The avaricious Shah wanted a heavy tribute for his favours. Baba Ala Singh could pay only one lakh and eighty thousand rupees. The Shah was not satisfied. The Baba was, therefore, arrested and taken to Lahore alongwith Shah's army. On his way to Lahore, Bibi Rajindra, grand daughter of Ala Singh, who lived at Phagwara, came to see Ala Singh and offered to pay the amount. But Ala Singh wisely rejected the offer by saying that it was not wise to take money from his daughter⁴⁸. When they reached Lahore, Abdali thought that it would not be useful to harass him any longer and he, therefore, asked him to remit the balance of payment by a *hundi* at an early date. The Sikh chief assured him full payment. The Baba Ala Singh returned to his territory and according to his promise sent to Kabul seventy thousand rupees by means of *hundis* through local bankers.

After the return of the Afghan Emperor, Baba Ala Singh took effective measures for the better administration of the Cis-Sutlej territory. In order to protect it against any possible aggression he created military posts at the following places :-

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| (i) Sadhaura | (ii) Buria | (iii) Shahabad |
| (iv) Rupar | (v) Panjaur ⁴⁹ | |

The *Dal Khalsa* could not tolerate this new arrangement. After the sack of Sirhind, the Sardars had divided the Cis-Sutlej territory among themselves and they could no longer tolerate interference of Baba Ala Singh. Nor could they recognize Abdali as their overlord. The manifest policy of Baba Ala Singh of placating the Afghan invader stood in open conflict to the general policy of the *Khalsa*. In the eyes of one section of the *Khalsa*, Baba Ala Singh's alliance was nothing less than treason against the *Guru* and the *Panth*, and they wanted to give exemplary punishment to him. With these popular sentiments Hari Singh Bhangi⁵⁰ led some Sikhs towards Patiala. When the enemies stood face to face Hari

Singh Bhangi was severely wounded in the very beginning of the battle. Then the wise counsel of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia prevailed and he persuaded the Sikhs to avoid civil war. Baba Ala Singh too did not want to displease the Sikhs. He explained to them that whatever he had done, was due to the expediency of the time and he was not against the Sikhs. In order to convince the Sikhs about his loyalty towards the Khalsa, Baba Ala Singh abolished his newly-created military posts in order to enable the Sikh Sardars to occupy their respective territories according to the previous arrangements and undertakings. He, also, agreed to lend his help to the Sikh campaigns across the Jamna¹¹.

Soon after the return of Ahmad Shah Abdali and his rapprochement with the Sikhs, Baba Ala Singh was laid up with fever and died on 22nd of August 1765 A.D.¹² His body was cremated in the Qila Mubarak in Patiala, whereon a *Gurdwara* has been erected. Thus ended the life of the great warrior, statesman, and founder of the Patiala Kingdom.

References

1. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 56.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 53
3. Ahmad Shah Abdali's policy of reconciliation with Ala Singh did not strike any discordant note with his general policy of reconciliation. After giving a crushing defeat to the Marathas he sent apologies to the Peshwa for killing his nephew Sadashive Bhau, the Commander-in Chief of the Maratha army in the battle of Panipat. His aim was to enlist the sympathies of the Marathas in favour of his Indian Dominion. Similarly, the Afghan Emperor after plundering Barnala and exacting heavy tribute from Ala Singh wanted to enlist his support and win the Sikh chieftain over to his side.

Tarikh-i-Patiala, pp. 56-57.

4. According to the author of *Tarikh-i-Patiala* 22 Shahban 1174 Hijri is 31st March 1761 which does not appear to be correct. It is 29 March 1761.
5. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 57.

The author of *Tarikh-i-Patiala* has written this on the basis of two Durrani Revenue Documents preserved in the Patiala Archives—both have been issued by Wazir-i-Azam, Shah Wali Khan, Prime Minister of Ahmad Shah Durrani and addressed to Mirza Muhammad Taqi. For detail see B.R. Grover's article The Punjab : Past and Present, Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, April 1990, pp. 196-233.

6. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was a celebrated Sikh leader of his times. He had served Nawab Kapur Singh another important leader of the Sikhs. Amar Singh, the grandson of Ala Singh, had taken *Pakul* at the hands of Jassa Singh. Hence there developed friendship between Ala Singh and Jassa Singh.
7. *Tarikh-i-Pattela*, p. 58.
8. *Panth Parkash*, Rattan Singh, p. 370.
9. Charat Singh was one of the most prominent Sikh leaders of the trans-Sutlej territory. He was the founder of the Sukarchakia Misl. He was the grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
10. *Mukhalas-ul-Zawarikh* by Syed Farzand Ali, p. 48.
Khazana-i-Amara, p. 114.
11. *Ghallughara* is a word of uncertain derivation. This word was first used by Rattan Singh in his *Panth Parkash*. According to the (*Gurmukhi*) *Mahan Kosh* by Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha *Ghallughara* means "complete destruction." Different estimates regarding the casualties during Ghallughara of February 1762 A.D. are given. According to Rattan Singh, 50,000 men, women and children were killed. J.N. Sarkar writes 10,000 to 20,000 keeping in view that it was a hand to hand fight for just more than half a day. It is estimated that number would have been about 15,000 or so.
12. *Panth Parkash*, Rattan Singh, p. 363.
13. *Khazana-i-Amara*, p. 114.
14. "Raja Laksharni Narain of Sirhind who was formerly the servant of Government (Maratha) and who is now *Derwan* (Manager) of Zain Khan, the *Faujdar* of Shah, has planned an attack on the fortress of Ala Jat by offering a ransom of fifty lakhs of rupees to Shah".
Raja Wade, Vol. VI letter No. 464.
According to Rattan Singh, Laksharni Narain, the *Diwan* of Sirhind, while once on collection tour was deprived of his collections by the Sikh bands. So on this account Laksharni Narain was greatly annoyed. Besides this being a man of the locality he knew Ala Singh's relations with the *Dal Khalsa*. In order to have his revenge he conspired against Ala Singh and persuaded the Shah to arrest Ala Singh.
15. *Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghana*, p. 125.
Ibrat Namah Ali-ud-din (Persian MS) since published Punjabi Adab Academy Lahore. 1961, p. 230.
16. *Tahmas Namah*, Tahmas Khan, p. 114.
17. *Marathi letter No. 465 Raj Wade Vol. VI* states that Ala Singh was taken to Kamdhan which is not correct.
18. *Panth Parkash*, Rattan Singh, p. 372.
19. Tahmas Khan was the personal attendant of Mir Mannu the Lahore governor (1748-1753 A.D.). After the death of his master he served Mughlani Begum. In 1761 A.D. he joined the service of Zain Khan, the governor of Sirhind.
20. *Tahmas Namah*, Tahmas Khan, p. 117.

20. *Tahmas Namah*, Tahmas Khen, p. 117.

21. **پسر زین خاں مد پچھلے سرحد اقامت دہشتہ باغیوں کاں آلا سنگر
جاٹ مرگم امور دت آجھا است**

News dated July 31, 1763 Akhbarat-i-Muttafarriqa MS. (Persian)

**زین خاں فوجداد سرحد مد خول پچھلے مرگم اقامت کے دہشتہ باغیوں
دشمن آلا سنگر در تعین و انتظام آجھا مرگم**

News dated October 11, 1763 Akhbarat-i-Muttafarriqa MS. (Persian)

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Panth Parkash*, Rattan Singh, p. 391.

24. *Risala-i-Budh Singh MS. Persian*, p. 35

Khalsa Namah MS. (Persian) p. 29

**قریب پنج ہزار سوار ترعب پنج ہزار پیادہ سوار زین خاں مرگم است
لیکن از نام یکہاں تپ لرزہ در اعلام جاں کے آفت**

Akhbarat-i-Muttafarriqa MS (Persian) p. 46.

25. **ਅਟਾਰਾ ਸੈ ਪਰ ਸਾਲ ਤੇ ਬੀਸ । ਬੀਤ ਗਏ ਪਰ ਬਿਸੁਮ ਨਹੀਂ ।**

ਅਸ ਚੋਕਸ ਚਿਹੇਦ ਬੋਹ ਚਾਹ । ਪੀਰ ਜੇਨੇ ਫਿਲ ਹੋਨੇ ਲਯੋਅਹ ।

Panth Parkash, Rattan Singh, p. 407

26. *Panth Parkash*, Rattan Singh, p. 410.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 397.

28. *Chiefs and Families of Note*, p. 208.

**جماد یکہاں کہ بعد از فوت حسین الگ دادنیہ بیگ خاں وغیرہ مریدان
نجات دہندہ بہت بالہ ہر روز بروز مرشدش افزائے دینی خاں فوجداد
سرحد آشتہ سرحد تاکہ نالی تقرقات خود با نمود**

Bian-i-Waqiat by Abdul Karim MS, p. 201

29. *Tarikh-i-Punjab—Kanhaya Lal*, p. 111.

30. *Gosha-i-Punjab*, p. 30.

31. Sirhind was first attacked by Banda Bahadur in 1710. For a second time it

was attacked in 1754. Again it was attacked by the Sikhs and the Marathas in 1758. Now in 1764 Surhind was completely destroyed.

32. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 61.

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Coins of Native Chiefs*, R.C. Temple.

Typed copy at Sikh History Reference Library, Amritsar.

Lepel Griffin writes in the *Rajas of the Punjab*.

"The mint of Patiala is said to have been established by the order of Ahmad Shah Durranī, when Patiala State was ruled by Maharaja Amar Singh; this would have been about 100 years ago, in fact, in one place in Patiala reports, Sambat 1820 (A.D. 1763) is mentioned as the year."

Page 318 (footnote).

The date for striking coins given by the Patiala record coincides with the fall of Surhind and it was the reign of Baba Ala Singh and not Maharaja Amar Singh when the first coin was struck as Baba Ala Singh died in 1765 A.D. R.C. Temple has rightly stated :-

"Alha Singh in the course of a warlike career, before his death in 1765 A.D. had founded Patiala town and State, had been a prisoner of Ahmad Shah in 1762, had been pelted by that monarch, receiving from the Afghan the title of Raja, had next destroyed and annexed the great Mohammedan provincial capital of Sirhind or Sirkund and had finally been created chief of the whole of the district (Chakla) by Ahmad Shah. The right to coin given by Ahmad Shah to the Phulkian States was clearly given in his time and the coins depicted in figure No. 1 and No. 2 are universally attributed by the local bankers (*Mahajan or Saraf*) to him, his mark being *Kaigt* or aigrette plume."

Coins of Modern Native Chiefs.

The inscription of the coin runs thus :-

سک شد از قلوب جہاں با حمد پادشاہ
یکے زلف پریم در از مرغی ای تاباہ

35. Bhikhan Khan's father, Jamal Khan, had proved to be one of the powerful enemies of Ala Singh. He had joined the powerful Muslim confederacy against him in 1731. Jamal Khan was killed in the battle which was fought between Adina Beg and Qutab Khan. Bhikhan Khan had succeeded him. Vide Chapter "Victory over the Bhattis."

36.

۱۷۶۴ میں فیضیہ الاسلامیہ دیکھیں خان لڑائی بہن جس میں
دیکھیں خان مارا گیا۔

Hyat-i-Afghana, p. 304.

37. *Tarikh-i-Patlala*, p. 35.

Man Singh, son of Bakhta Singh, brother of Ala Singh had already conquered Malaud Territory from the Afghans of Malerkotla.

Ludhiana District Gazetteer, p. 112.

38. *Tahmas Namah*, Tahmasap Khan, p. 114.

39. Najib's conflict with the Sikhs in his own dominions, as distinct from his engagements with them as an auxiliary in Abdali's army, had begun in January 1764, when the Sikh forces flushed with their slaughter of Zam Khan and capture of Sirhind overflowed across the Jamna into the Upper Doab.

Fall of Mughal Empire, Vol. II, p. 394.

40. News Ziul Haj 28, 1177 Hijri, 28th June 1764, *Akhbarat-i-Muttafariqa* (Persian).

ہفتاد ہجری قمریہ نے حضرت نجیب الدولہ پر اسے کڑا اور قبول نہ کیا
 سکے ایں سال وجہ مسافت کے کہ نہ وہ تعلقہ نجیب الدولہ
 پنج سنہ نامہ

A few months after the death of Maharaja Ala Singh, the Sikhs again invaded Najib's territory in November, 1765. No conciliation was made as Baba Ala Singh was no more in this world.

41. *Baba Ala Singh* (Gurmukhi) by Karam Singh, p. 232.
 42. *Jang Namah Qazi Nur Mohammad*, Published by the Sikh History Research Department Khalsa College, Amritsar, p. 44.
 43. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
 44. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
 45. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
 46. ਆਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਤਰ ਬਕੀਲ ਖਾਲਸਾ। ਸਭ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਪੈ ਸ ਚਲ ਆਯਾ।
 ਲਖੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਵੇ ਕਠੇ ਹੁ ਚਾਲ। ਸਿਲ ਜਾ ਆਖੀ ਲਾਹਿ ਸਰਾਲ।
 ਹਉ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਉਰਦ ਲਏ। ਹਰਜ ਮੇਕਏ ਕਬ ਕਿਸ ਨੈ ਲਏ।
 ਹੁਕਮਤ ਮੈ ਸਿਖਤ ਕਿਯਾ ਮਿਲ। ਬਖੂਰ ਅਕਲ ਵੇ ਸਿਮ ਵੇ ਖੋਲ।
 ਹਮ ਵੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਰਜ ਸਿਖ ਲੀਯ। ਖਾਲਸੇ ਬੈਠਿ ਭੈਟ ਸਿਲ ਲੀਯ।

Panth Parkash, Rattan Singh, p. 385.

Browne also writes "Ahmad Shah Durrani, receiving advice of this, sent a person to the Sikh leaders in the quality of the Ambassador, to negotiate a peace with them."

Origin and Progress of the Sikhs, p. 25.

47. *Jung Namah - Qasi Nur Mohammad*, p. 48.
48. *Patiala Raj Dian Parsidh Bibian*.
49. *Tazakira-i-Khandan-i-Rajaha-i-Phuikian*.
50. *Jassa Singh Binod*, a Gurmukhi manuscript states that Hari Singh Bhangi was severely wounded by Patiala forces in Samvat 1822 i.e. 1765 A.D. and it also states that Baba Ala Singh was the Patiala ruler at that time

ਹੈਰ ਹੋਰਾ ਸੰਗ ਚਲਾਏ ਗਾਥੇਂ ਹੋਰਾ ਹੋ ਚੁਧਾ ਹੀ ਰਾਜਾ ਆਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ
 ਹੋਰਾ ਕੀ ਏ ਐਰ ਹੀ ਫੁਲਕਿਆਂ ਸਰਦਾਰਾ ਕੇ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ਜੇ ਹੁਮ
 ਸਾਥ ਚਲੇ.....ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੁਥਾ ਕੀ ਲਾਹ ਕੀ
 ਮਦਲੀ ਮੇ ਗੋਲੀ ਕਾ ਜਖਮ ਸਖਰ ਲਗਾ ।

Hakikat Hindustan Ki Mahiniki, p. 151

According to McGregor it was Hari Singh Bhangi who captured the *Bhangi Top* from Jehan Khan. Later on *Top Bhangian* was captured by the English on the night of 21st December 1846 (in the battle of Ferozshah).

History of Sikhs Vol. I, by McGregor, p. 12

51. *Jassa Singh Binod*, p. 151.
52. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 61.

ADMINISTRATION

They serve God well, who serve his creatures

Mrs. Norton

Baba Ala Singh's administration was very simple and served the needs of the time. His untutored genius had evolved the way of government which included some of the fundamentals of any modern state. One of the most important aspects of his administration was that the ruler had a secular outlook. He, like Akbar the Great, made no distinction of caste and creed in making appointments in his State. He was the first Sikh ruler to initiate a non-religious outlook in administration, which culminated during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He had employed a Muslim, Lakhana Dogar, as Commander of his army¹. He gave employment to Nagahia Khan, son of Sondhe Khan, when the latter died and the former was left forlorn². Sardar Khan Rajput of Munak, when ousted from his village, was also given a lucrative post³. Mohammad Saleh Khokhar was one of his ardent admirers. Finding anarchy and chaos all around, he wanted Baba's overlordship, and therefore the Baba brought the Pargana of Sannaur under his sway.⁴ The Baba Ala Singh enjoyed the confidence of both Hindus and Muslims. Chowdhury Bir Bhan of village Sanghera was the first person to accept the overlordship of the Baba and helped him a lot to settle at Barnala.⁵ Qazi Nur Mohammad, the contemporary writer has rightly stated :—

ہاں بندہ خدا فرما پریش

کے سامنے تانہ ہم لڑ کر شش

"The Muslims are also his employees and the Hindus, too, are obedient to him."

Baba Ala Singh displayed great tact and courage in dealing with his Muslim subjects. After the battle of Rampura and the conquest of Jamalpur he summoned Shamsudin and Hassan Ulla, two prominent persons of the locality and asked them whether they wanted Jagir or service. They replied, "We are the servants of the King, why should we beg Jagir or service from a Jat. We want nothing from you." The Baba wisely kept silent and left the place after appointing Desu Singh there. Later on Desu Singh called those very persons and conveyed to them the Baba's message, which ran as follows :—

"You should be obedient to us and we shall be obedient to you".⁷

It was due to his secular policy that he could carry on his administration efficiently. We do not hear of any revolt by his Muslim subjects. He never destroyed any mosque nor resorted to any kind of religious persecution. He mostly ruled over Muslim peasantry, who were contented and happy.

Baba Ala Singh rose to the highest position from the ordinary status of a peasant. He, therefore, knew the difficulties of the peasants and had great regard for the welfare of the people in general and of the peasantry in particular. He knew fully well the danger of famines, which occurred so frequently and were a great menace to the welfare of the people. During his life time he had seen so many famines. One famine occurred in 1694 A.D.⁸ when he was a toddler, another in 1713 A.D.⁹ and a third in 1722 A.D.¹⁰ The famines had caused great destruction and afforded ample opportunity for loot and plunder. During the famine of 1713 A.D., the Pathans of Maler Kotla organised roving bands for carrying on depredations. The havoc caused by them brought him this firm conviction

that only extensive cultivation could save the people from the clutches of food-grain scarcity. He, therefore, founded many villages like Longowal, Dirba and Chhajli¹¹, where fallow tracts of land were brought under the plough. Many villages in ruins were rehabilitated and the zamindars were encouraged to settle there. Thus he brought vast tracts of land under cultivation. This encouragement to agriculture helped his finances and his liberal patronage added to his revenues and yielded him surplus grains to be stored for future emergencies.

Baba Ala Singh's new colonies brought him many benefits. The inhabitants of these new settlements were greatly indebted to him. He had given them land; out of gratitude their loyalty to him was assured. The inhabitants of village Sheron, who were given land, helped him to escape from the imprisonment of Ali Mohammad Khan.¹² The resettlement of territories around Munak led him to conquer more territory towards Tohana and Jamalpur.¹³ The founding of the new villages of Longowal, Chhajli and Dirba and the reclamation of the territories around these villages helped him to advance towards Sunam and ultimately conquer it. It was due to the extensive cultivation of land that he could easily spare food for his political allies and friends, when they were in need. In 1758 he helped Alamgir II with foodgrains.¹⁴ His supply of provisions to Alamgir II and his *Wazir*, Imad, was made at a most critical hour. There was utter shortage of food in the Emperor's camp at that time. Again, during the Battle of Panipat in 1761 he supplied provisions to the Maratha forces¹⁵ at a time when they were on the verge of starvation. It was also due to the abundance of foodgrains with him that he could start and continue the common kitchen where everybody could get free meals.¹⁶

Baba Ala Singh's method of civil administration was very simple. In every locality he had appointed one *Thanedar*

(Police Inspector) and one Dewan (*Collector*). The Thanedar was entrusted with the work of maintaining law and order, while the Dewan's main function was to collect revenues and deposit them in the treasury. After the conquest of Tohana, the Baba Ala Singh appointed Bira Singh and Bika Singh Sekhon as *Thanedar* of Tohana, and Sahib Rai was appointed as *Tehsildar*. Sahib Rai was succeeded by Hazari Mal. The Hindus were mostly appointed as Dewans.¹⁷ whereas the Sikhs were appointed as *Thanedars*. The collection of revenue was done either by the *Batai* system (division of crops) or the Kankut (estimate of standing crops). At all places, there used to be one *Kachhu* (measurer) which helped the collection of revenue. Usually the revenue collected used to be one third of the total produce. Revenue was accepted in cash or kind.¹⁸

The Baba Ala Singh had organised his military on lines similar to those of Sher Shah Suri. Like the great Afghan, he followed the policy of building forts at strategic places. Whenever he conquered a new territory he built a fortress at a strategic place in order to protect the inhabitants of the area. For consolidating his possessions on Sunam side he built a mud fort at Longowal.¹⁹ Later on when he conquered a portion of Samana Pargana, he built a fort at Dodan²⁰, modern Bhiwani Garh. After his conquest of the Pargana of Sanaur he built a mud fort at Patiala in 1753, which was later on replaced by a *pucca* fort in 1764 A.D.²¹ He also got repaired the old forts at Barnala, Munak and Sunam. Military was stationed in every fort. The total strength of his cavalry was about 7000.²² His army was frequently reinforced by the *Dal Khalsa*.²³

The army of the Baba Ala Singh mainly consisted of cavalry, although artillery was also maintained. Infantry was held in low estimation by the Sikhs and no Sikh wanted to be enrolled in the infantry. In his fight against Zain Khan, in which Zain Khan was defeated and killed, Baba Ala Singh

acquired many artillery pieces fitted to the hunches of the camels.²⁴ This greatly added to his armaments. The bulk of his army was consisted of cavalry. The Sikhs were very fond of horses and almost every Sikh had a horse during those days. A strong and well-built horse was considered a necessary equipment of a Sikh as Forster says :-

"A Sikh horseman was armed with matchlock and fibre of excellent metal and his horse used to be strong and well-built."²⁵

Baba Ala Singh combined military action and agricultural advancement in such a way that extensive cultivation was always made a stepping stone to military conquests. His surplus stores of grain were a clear indication of the peasant's whole-hearted cooperation.

References

1. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 63
2. *Tazkira-i-Khandan-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian*, MS.
3. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 63.
4. ~~II~~
5. *Tazkira-i-Khandan-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian*, MS.
6. *Jang Nama*, p. 126.
7. *Statement of Karam Ali—Boundary Dispute Correspondence, Volume 4.*

8. ਸਰਦਾਰ ਸੈ ਪੇਸਾਹ ਇਕ ਕਹਿਤ ਭਯੋ ਰਹਾ ਆਇ।

ਕਹਿਤ ਕਹਿਤਾ ਉਸਤਾਦਿ ਲੋਕ ਗਏ ਗਾਇ ਗਾਇ।

Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand MS., p. 23.

9. ਸਰਦਾਰ ਸੈ ਸਭੁ ਭੈ ਸਲਾ। ਕਹਿਤ ਭਯੋ ਭੈ ਭਾਈ ਉਥਲਾ।

ਹਲ ਮਿਲ ਭੈ ਸਭ ਭੋਮ ਪਚਾਲਾ। ਆਪਸ ਸੈ ਬਹਿ ਮਰਾ ਪਚਾਲਾ।

ਮਲ ਕੁਟ ਹਮ ਖਾਏ ਭੈ ਹਾਥ ਹਮਏ ਆਇ।

ਲਾਛਾਈ ਸੈ ਰੋਲੀ ਏਕਾ ਕਿਸੁ ਨ ਖਲੈ ਪਾਇ।

Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand, p. 38-39.

10. *Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran*, p. 65.

11. *Tazkira-i-Khandan-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian*, MS, (Persian).

12. According to Giani Gian Singh, Jodh Singh Randhawa and Jiwan Singh Randhawa of village Sheron helped the Baba Ala Singh to escape from the imprisonment of Ali Mohammad Khan; vide also Karam Singh's *Baba Ala Singh*, p. 134.
13. *Statement of Kapur Singh, Attorney of Maharaja Karam Singh. Boundary Dispute Correspondence, Vol. I.*
14. *Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani*, p. 83.
15. *Khazana-i-Amara*, p. 107.
16. *Tazkira-i-Khandan-i-Rajaka-i-Phulktan*.
17. *Statement of Ghulam Farid Khan, dated 11th August, 1820. Boundary Dispute Correspondence, Vol. I.*
18. *Punjab States Gazetteer A (1904)*, p. 150.
19. *Tarikh-i-Punjab* by Bute Shah (MS. Persian).
20. *Risala-i-Rajju Singh* (MS, Persian) also Giani Gian Singh's *Raj Khalsa*.
21. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 61.
22. *Tarikh-i-Bina wa Aruj-i-Sikhan* (Persian MS).
23. *Panik Parkash*, Rattan Singh, p. 337.
24. *Gosha-i-Punjab* (Urdu), p. 30.
Panik Parkash, Rattan Singh, p. 393.
25. *Forster's Travels, Vol. I*, p. 288.

THE STATESMAN

*True statesmanship is the art of changing a nation from
what it is into what it ought to be*

W.R. Alger

Baba Ala Singh was a great statesman and a ruler of exceptional ability as it has been rightly stated by an eminent historian. "The unusual prolonged life and exceptional ability of Ala Singh Jat enabled him to found the kingdom of Patiala on an enduring basis. His success was crowned at the close of his life when he was recognized as lawful Governor of Sarhind".¹ To found a State on enduring foundations in those chaotic times when "the Jats, the Rohillas, the Sikhs, the Marathas, the Rajputs, Oudh Nawabs, English Company and French adventurers, besides the Delhi Emperors and their semi-independent nobles—all entered into criss-cross Indian politics" and struggled for domination, is the greatest tribute to his marvellous sagacity and diplomatic shrewdness. He developed relationship with no less than four great powers of India. The Maratha records describe him as a great friend and ally of the Marathas. His is the only name among the Sikh Misaldars which is so frequently mentioned in the Marathi letters. Long before the Maratha occupation of the Punjab, he had been¹ mentioned in the Marathi despatch dated March 1757, which clearly proves that he was known to the Marathas even before their conquest of the Punjab. Sadashive Bhau, the Commander-in-Chief of the Maratha army, was fully conscious of the importance of the part that Baba Ala Singh was to play in the battle of Panipat. He, therefore, marched towards the Baba's territory after his occupation of Kunjpura. He was

actuated by a desire to win the Baba Ala Singh to his side.³ The Peshwa also started correspondence with him as is clear from Laxman Appaji Ekbote's letter :-

"Your honour had sent some letters to Ala Singh which have been replied by the Jat Sardar. All details will be known from them."⁴

Baba Ala Singh fully responded to the Peshwa's call for friendship, and helped the starving Marathas with foodgrains at great risk of Ahmad Shah's displeasure. Besides this, he gave protection and shelter to Maratha fugitives after the fateful battle of Panipat.

Baba Ala Singh's statesmanship became more conspicuous when he cultivated the friendship of Najib-ud-Daula the Rohilla leader, who was considered the right-hand man of Ahmad Shah Abdali. It was Najib who was made the "Virtual Dictator" of Delhi and its surrounding territory after the battle of Panipat. The first reference to the mutual regard between Baba Ala Singh and Najib is found in the *Tahmasap Namah* of Miskin.⁵ When the Afghan Emperor after wading through the streams of blood of the Sikhs reached Barnala, he arrested the Sikh chief. At that critical time the Baba Ala Singh sought the help of Najib in order to patch up with Ahmad Shah Abdali by paying him tribute. But soon help rendered to the founder of Patiala Kingdom was reciprocated when after the sack of Sirhind and the defeat and death of Zain Khan, the *Khalsa Dals* crossed the Jamna and ravaged the territory of Najib. Najib had slain Suraj Mal Jat of Bharatpur and was expecting vendetta at the hands of his son, Jawahar Singh. He could not fight on both fronts and he wanted to make peace with the Sikhs. Baba Ala Singh came to the help of his friend and brought about peace between Najib and the Sikhs.⁶ Soon after this event Najib was besieged at Delhi by the combined forces of Jawahar Singh Jat and the

Marathas. Owing to his previous relationship with Najib, the Baba Ala Singh sent one contingent of a few thousand soldiers under Bhola Singh to fight on behalf of Najib.⁷

Baba Ala Singh was not only an ally of the Marathas and a friend of Najib but at times he also helped the Mughal Emperors. He did not want to perpetuate Mughal authority but as a shrewd statesman, he aided the Mughal emperors whenever it suited his purpose. In 1748 after his detention by Ali Mohammad Khan, the *Faujdar* of Sirhind, he wanted to recover his lost prestige and power. The opportunity offered itself when Prince Ahmad, (the son of Emperor Mohammad Shah, who succeeded his father as Emperor in the same year 1748), advanced towards Sirhind in order to check the advance of Ahmad Shah Abdali. The battle was fought at Manupur.⁸ Baba Ala Singh fought as an ally of Delhi Government and won distinction in the battle. After the successful termination of the campaign, he was honoured with a robe of honour by Prince Ahmad.⁹ It greatly enhanced his prestige and power in the eyes of his neighbours. Again when in 1758 Ghazi-ud-din Imad led Emperor Alamgir II to the territory of Hansi and Hissar, the Mughal troopers began to fight with Mohammad Amin Khan, the arch enemy of Baba Ala Singh. There was great dearth of provisions in the Mughal Camp. Baba Ala Singh met the Wazir and helped the Mughal troopers with supplies.¹⁰ By rendering help to Alamgir II, the Mughal Emperor and his Wazir, Imad, he won the royal favour and thus saved his territory from the Mughal troopers' plunder, which was so common in those days. Secondly like a far-sighted statesman he hit at his enemy, Mohammad Amin Khan, the Bhatti chief, by making a coalition with the Emperor.

Baba Ala Singh's relations with the *Dal Khalsa* or his own co-religionists were very cordial and deep. If at times he cultivated friendship with other powers (which was resented

by the *Dal Khalsa*) it was only when he feared that the Sikh supremacy in the Cis-Sutlej territory, which had been won by the combined efforts of the *Dal Khalsa*¹¹ and his efforts, was in grave danger of extinction at the hands of the victor of Panipat. But Baba Ala Singh never made friends at the cost of the *Dal Khalsa* : his loyalty to his co-religionists was unflinching. When the Sikhs after the defeat and death of Zain Khan, the Afghan Governor of Sirhind, entered the territory of Najib by crossing the Jamna, Najib wanted to fight out the *Dals* from his territory. For this purpose he asked for military aid from Baba Ala Singh. But the Baba was not to fight against his own brethren. He, therefore, refused the request. On the other hand, he exerted his influence to bring about reconciliation between Najib and the Sikhs. It was only due to his efforts that Najib agreed to pay eighty thousand rupees to the Sikhs and the amount was paid through the Baba.¹²

At the cost of repetition, it needs be mentioned again that Baba Ala Singh dearly loved the Sikh form and symbols. When Ahmad Shah Abdali after the bloody battle of Kup (*Ghallughara*) came to Barnala, he ordered that the long hair of Baba Ala Singh be cropped. This was an attack on the sacred symbols of the Khalsa Brotherhood.¹³ The Baba Ala Singh intimated to the Shah that he was prepared to purchase his hair.¹⁴ He paid one lakh and twentyfive thousand rupees—as a price of his long hair—and saved the symbol of the Guru, he loved most.

The Baba Ala Singh was a staunch Sikh and was recognised as a powerful ally of the *Dal Khalsa*. Whenever there occurred the need of reconciliation between the Sikhs and the Muslim Chiefs he was approached to act as a mediator. When Zain Khan was greatly disturbed over the occupation of his territory by the *Dal Khalsa*, he approached Baba Ala Singh

to mediate. The Baba negotiated peace between the *Dal Khalsa* and Zain Khan, by virtue of which the *Dal Khalsa* received a big amount from the Abdali Governor of Sirhind.¹⁵ During his sixth invasion Ahmad Shah Abdali was convinced of the invincibility of the Sikhs and so he wanted to arrive at some understanding with them. He asked the Baba to act as a mediator and the Baba's Vakil, Nanu Singh Grewal, was sent to the *Dal Khalsa*¹⁶ for this purpose.

At times the Sikhs felt antagonized by the apparently compromising policy of Baba Ala Singh. But wise Sikh leaders like Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, knew fully well that the Baba's submission to Abdali and his acceptance of honours and a title at the hands of Afghan Emperor were no less than a piece of diplomacy, which was aimed at the protection of Sikh territory in the Cis-Sutlej area. It was owing to this understanding that Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the greatest Sikh leader of the times, always persuaded the Sikhs not to fight against the Baba Ala Singh. When Ahmad Shah Abdali issued a *firman* and conferred a robe of honour on the Baba, the Sikhs in general resented it. But it was Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who rightly understood the policy of Baba and persuaded the Sikhs to avoid a quarrel with him. When Ahmad Shah Abdali, after the death of Zain Khan, conferred the insignia of sovereignty¹⁷ (i.e. banner and drum) on the Baba in 1765, the Sikhs felt antagonized. Here again the Ahluwalia Sardar intervened and brought about a reconciliation with the Sikhs because he rightly knew that the Baba Ala Singh was a true Sikh and his policy towards Ahmad Shah was just political expediency.

The Baba Ala Singh had been following an anti-Abdali policy upto 1761. He was foremost in attacking Afghan foraging parties in the battle of Manupur (1748 A.D.).¹⁸ It was he who deprived Timur Shah, the son of Ahmad Shah

Abdali, of huge booty, which he was carrying to his own country.¹⁹ Moreover, it was the Baba, who had helped the Marathas with foodgrains despite Ahmad Shah's blockade of the Maratha Camp. Uptil 1761 Baba Ala Singh had opposed the Afghan Emperor tooth and nail, with the result that Barnala, the chief town of Baba Ala Singh, was plundered by Ahmad Shah Abdali. Fateh Kaur, wife of Baba Ala Singh, saved the situation by sending a deputation to the Shah and paying him a tribute.²⁰ Strangely enough the Afghan Emperor was not satisfied with the tribute and wanted the Baba's personal presence. At that time a fight against the victor of Panipat would have meant annihilation of Sikh rule in the Cis-Sutlej territory. The Afghan Emperor at that time was following a policy of "live and let live."²¹ He, therefore, issued a *Firman* making Baba Ala Singh independent of the *Faujdar* of Sirhind and conferred upon him a robe of honour. This was done in order to win his sympathies in favour of Abdali's dominions in India just as he had tried his best to win the favour of the Marathas after the battle of Panipat.²²

The treatment meted out to Baba Ala Singh after the bloody battle of Kup (*Ghallughara 1762*) by Ahmad Shah Abdali was a great contrast to his previous treatment when the *Firman* and the title were conferred on him. It was a clear indication that Ahmad Shah Abdali considered him an important member of the Sikh community whom he had undertaken to exterminate.

Baba Ala Singh took the most active part in defeating and killing Zain Khan, the Afghan Governor of Sirhind. But when the Afghan Emperor again invaded India in 1765, the Baba had retired to his own territory. The Emperor visited Sirhind and found the city in ruins. He then called Baba Ala Singh. It is clear from the following lines of Qazi Nur Mohammad:

"When the Shah passed through his (Ala Singh's) country, he sent a messenger to call him to his presence, saying that if he would come, he would obtain all the wishes and desires of his heart, otherwise his whole country and property should be devastated and he would also lose his head."²³

Baba Ala Singh, therefore, thought it expedient to appear before the Afghan Emperor. But at the very face of the Shah he paid a tribute to the invincibility of the Sikhs. Qazi Nur Moharrunad, who accompanied the Emperor, has recorded the following words which were uttered by Baba Ala Singh :-

"If one Sikh dies, two up revengeful ones come up to take his place in accordance with the benediction of their Guru."²⁴

Ahmad Shah Abdali did not want to commit the blunder of appointing any Muslim governor of Sirhind. Baba Ala Singh was appointed Governor of the territory and for the time being he stationed his military at important places.²⁵ As this action of the Baba was greatly resented and criticised, he, therefore, removed his military post in order to allow the Sikhs to occupy their respective territories. Thus the close perusal of all these events with their background of his eternal loyalty to the *Dal Khalsa* gives an ample proof that Baba Ala Singh's aim was never inconsistent with that of other Sikhs and his temporary surrender to Ahmad Shah Abdali and payment of tribute to him was nothing more than political expediency and a piece of diplomacy.

Baba Ala Singh was the greatest Sikh statesman of his times. He made such a balance of alliances with the Marathas, Najib Khan and Abdali in such a way that it enhanced his prestige and power and raised him to be one of the most important chiefs of the territory north-west of Delhi. To the Sikhs he was a friend and an ally and he used to serve them

with devotion. Unluckily the Maharaja died at a time when his prestige and power had just reached their zenith.

References

1. J.N. Sarker, *Fall of Mughal Empire Vol I*, p. 423.
2. *Rajwade, Vol. I*, page 85 (Marathi) C.S. Sardesai's *Selections from Peshwa Daftar, Vol. No. 21, letter No. 116*.
3. Bhau went a stage further with a view to subjugate the Province of Sirhind by the march on Kurukshetra. He refreshed his army after persuading the zamindars, Sikhs and Jats, to join him.

Selections from Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 21, letter 197.

4. *Selections from Peshwa Daftar, vol 21 Letter No. 262.*
5. Tahmasap Khan, the pen-name Miskin, was the personal attendant of Mir Mannu, the Governor of the Punjab. Later on he joined the service of Zann Khan, the Abdali Governor of Sirhind. Tahmasap Khan's account is one of the most reliable and is an eye-witness account of Ala Singh and of other events of Sikh history.
6. *Akhbarat-i-Muttafarriqa-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, MS. (Persian)
7. Karam Singh, *Baba Ala Singh* (Gurmukhi) p. 232.
8. Manupur is eight miles from Sirhind.
9. *Tazakira-i-Anand Ram Mukhlis*, MS Persian, p. 271.
10. *Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sanl*, p. 83.
11. The territorial acquisitions of Baba Ala Singh had been made mostly by the combined efforts of the *Dal Khalsa*. In 1731 A.D. the Maharaja had defeated a powerful Muslim confederacy with the help of the *Dal Khalsa*.

Tarikh-i-Patiala, p. 51, 53.

The conquests of Baba Ala Singh towards Sunam side had also been made with the military aid of *Dal Khalsa* (Rattan Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 337). In 1734 Bhai Gurbaksh Singh with the help of *Dal Khalsa* annexed the areas of Tohana and Jarnalpur.

12. *Akhbarat-i-Muttafarriqa*, MS. (Persian)
13. ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਮ ਜਨੀ । ਕੁਰ ਸਮ ਅਵਕ ਬੇਸ ਕੇ ਰਾਜੀ ॥
14. *Saltatin-i-Afghana* by Ahmad Yedgar, p. 26.
15. *Akhbarat-i-Muttafarriqa*.
16. *Panth Parkash*, p. 371.
17. *Jang Nama*, Qazi Nur Mohammad, p. 48.
18. *Tazkira-i-Anand Ram Mukhlis*, p. 271.

19. *S.P.D. Vol. 21, letter No. 116.*
20. *Tarikh-i-Patala*, page 56.
21. *Fall of Mughal Empire* Vol. II, p. 379.
22. Ahmed Shah sent to the Peshwa his special messenger Yakub Khan, in order to offer his apologies for the murder of his nephew, Sadashive Bhau.
Fall of Mughal Empire, Vol. II, p. 379.
23. *Jang Nama*, p. 46.
24. *Jang Nama*, p. 48.
25. *Tazkira-i-Khandan-i-Rajha-i-Panipat*.

CHARACTER AND ESTIMATE

Those who can command themselves command others.

Hazlet

Baba Ala Singh had a tall and impressive figure and possessed a very well-built body. He had little of book learning but like Akbar, the great Mughal, he possessed great political sagacity, a steady intellect and a clear vision. He had the best qualities of a Sikh Jat, energy, courage, shrewdness and an indomitable spirit, that would never accept a defeat. One of the contemporaries, Anand Ram Mukhlis, has greatly admired his gallantry and intrepidity in attacking the foraging parties of Ahmad Shah Abdali in the battle of Manupur. His inborn courage and pluck were mainly responsible for his rapid rise to power.

The moral character of Baba Ala Singh shines like a beaconlight seen against the depravity, rape and plunder so frequently indulged in by contemporary rulers.¹ In that age of moral laxity he observed strict monogamy and took it upon himself not to look upon other women with an evil eye. The following account about the character of Baba Ala Singh has been profusely quoted in the Patiala records :-

"Once Baba Ala Singh went up on the roof of his house at Longowal and there accidentally he saw a young naked girl who was taking her bath on the roof of her house. Shutting his eyes he came downstairs. He called her father and having told him the whole account apologized. Not only this, Baba Ala Singh considering the girl as his own daughter defrayed the expenses of her marriage."²

Baba Ala Singh was one of those early Sikhs who had rightly understood the tenets of Sikhism and who scrupulously practised them in his life. Just as he had strictly followed the religious principle of abstinence from sexual pleasures, he acted upon the words of Guru Gobind Singh "May the kettle (*Degh*) and the sword *Tegh* go hand in hand in the Sikh world."³ He fully knew that the *Tegh*, the sword was the symbol of the warlike Khalsa whereas the *Deg*, the kettle, represented the Khalsa's service to humanity and the two could not be separated. He had, therefore, started a common kitchen for feeding the poor. Fateh Kaur, his wife, took special interest in this respect and devoted herself to the service in the common kitchen. The Sikhs from different localities and areas were served there with great devotion.

Like all great men, Baba Ala Singh possessed great presence of mind and we do not find even a single example which may indicate that he ever lost his temper. On the other hand, he could resist the greatest provocation. Once Fateh Kaur was serving in the common kitchen and one rash Sikh who was being served there stood up and poured "hot pulses (*Daal*)" over her head and remarked "Why have pulses been cooked with so much water in it?" Fateh Kaur's head was scalded and she felt greatly annoyed. When Baba Ala Singh came home, the matter was brought to his notice. He, with his characteristic calmness, said to his wife, "The Sikh has done well. He has cut short your troubles. Had he not done so, you would have been caught by the Mughals and in order to kill you they would have poured burning oil on your head. You should, therefore, be thankful to the Sikh, instead of being annoyed with him."⁴

Baba Ala Singh displayed rare courage and presence of mind when he was imprisoned by Ahmed Shah Abdali, who

ordered that his hair should be cut. It was the severest blow to a Sikh like Baba Ala Singh. But he was never dismayed at this order and he sent a word to the avaricious Shah that he was prepared to purchase his hair. Afghan Emperor agreed to the proposal.⁵

It was no mean achievement to rise from a zamindar to be a builder of a Raj, which has survived till PEPSU, an amalgam of seven East Punjab states formed in 1948, Maharaja Patiala being head (Patiala and East Punjab States Union, was later on merged with Punjab in 1956). Before the advent of the Baba on the stage of history almost the whole of the Cis-Sutlej territory was being looted and plundered either by the Bhatti raiders (*katak*) or by Brar roving bands. There was no security of life and nobody could consider his person safe unless he was strong enough to defend himself. The greatest achievement of the Baba was that he gave peace and prosperity to the people, whom he brought under his rule. He created such balancing alliances as secured peace for his territory. His friendship with the Marathas saved his territory from Maratha depredations. His temporary submission to Abdali saved his territory and his subjects from Abdali's loot and plunder which were the most conspicuous features of his Indian campaigns. The most important force of the time was the *Dal Khalsa*. His deep and cordial relationship with the *Dal Khalsa* saved his subjects from the exactions of the *Dal*. His untutored genius made his kingdom a place of security and his wise and just rule attracted men of all classes and creeds to settle down in his principality which was considered as one of those spots in the Cis-Sutlej territories where peace and prosperity reigned.

Two historians, one contemporary and one modern, have given the following estimates of Baba Ala Singh :

Qazi Nur Mohammad who accompanied Ahmad Shah

Abdali in his sixth invasion of India (1765 A.D.) was an eye-witness of the great glory of Baba Ala Singh. His account is contemporaneous and most authentic. He has given the following estimate.

"In that country of Sirhind there was a Chief, nay a commander of an army, who was a zamindar in that land and also a ruler *Hakim*, a Governor *Zabti* and a Commissioner *Amin*. No body else is so resourceful in the countries of the Punjab, Lahore and Sirhind as he is. He has got Mohammadans also in his service. All Hindus are obedient to him."⁶

Lapel H. Guffin has given the following estimate of Baba Ala Singh:

"Among the Sikh Chiefs of his day, Ala Singh was certainly one of the most distinguished. He was gallant and at the same time prudent and laid strongly the foundations of the most important of Cis-Sutlej states he was the most powerful Chief, in south of the Sutlej."⁷

References

1. Alamgir II verging on the age of sixty shamelessly demanded the hand of Hazrat Begum, sixteen years old daughter of Mohammad Shah. Ahmad Shah Abdali who was of grandfatherly age forcibly took her into his harem.

Fall of Mughal Empire Vol. II, p. 103.

In Delhi many men have been slain and many women ravished. Some of the females have committed suicide (with daggers), others have drowned themselves. Wherever handsome Hindu women were reported, Abdali sent his men who brought them to his quarters."

A Marathi newsletter report. Vol. XXI, p. 104.

Fall of Mughal Empire, Vol. II, p. 102.

2. *Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand* (MS, Gurmukhi), p. 96.

Tazkira-i-Khandan-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian.

Tarikh-i-Patlala, p. 62.

3. "ਏਕ ਏਕ ਸਜ ਮੈ ਏਉ ਚਲੈ".

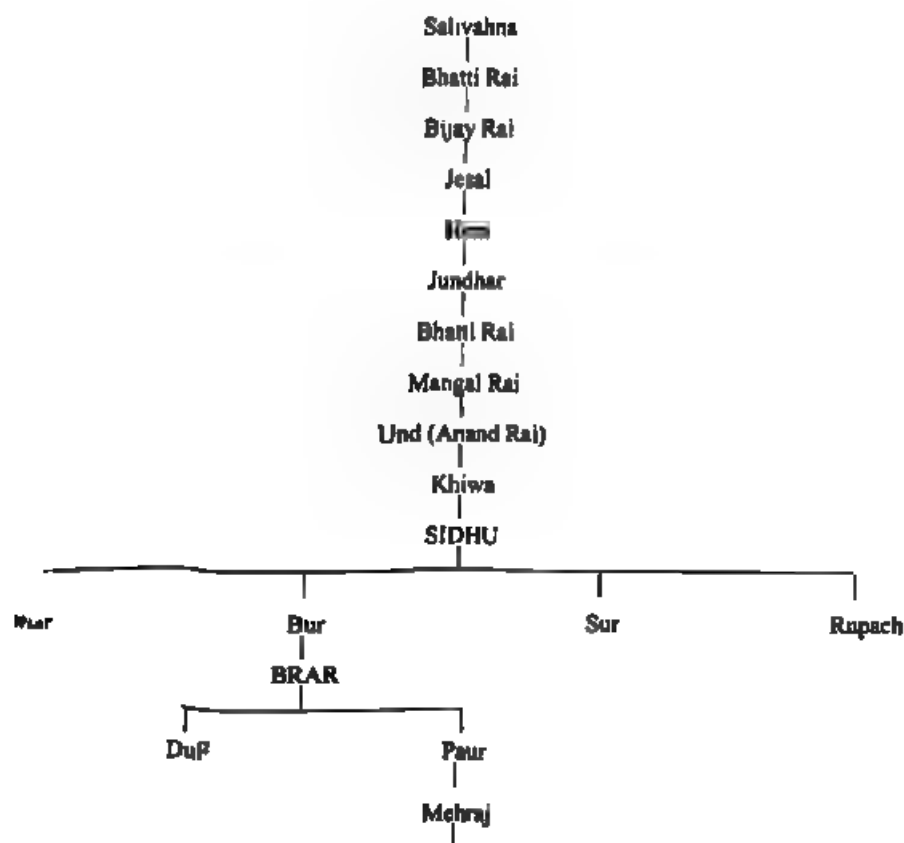
May the Kettle and the sword go hand in hand in this world. The *Hukarnamah* and *firman*s of Banda Bahadur and the coins of Maharaja

APPENDIX NO 1

BABA ALA SINGH'S EARLY ANCESTORS

The course of the history of the Cis-Sutlej territory would have been different had not the House of Phul provided a long succession of able warriors and statesmen including Baba Ala singh. The House of Phul traces its descent from Bhatti Rajputs, who were rulers of Jaisalmer State. In still remoter times these "Bhatti Rajputs", the descendants of "Yadu Bhatti Tribe", as Tod calls them, had ruled over the whole tract of land comprising modern Afghanistan, Western Pakistan and the Punjab (India).¹ Raja Salivahna was the first of the Yadus who settled in the Punjab and built a fortress named Salivahnपुरा (Sialkot-West Punjab). The third in line from Salivahna was Bhatti Rao, who provided the tribal patronym.² The most powerful among the Bhattis was Bijay Rai, who bore the brunt of the attack of Mahmud of Ghazni and fell fighting after a brave fight.³

Seventh⁴ in line from Bijay Rai was Maharawal Jaisal who founded Jaisalmer (Rajasthan). The third son of Jaisal was Hem. Hem, owing to some family bickering, came towards Bhatinda and Bhatner (modern Hanuman Garh in Bikaner), where he carved out a small principality.⁵ Hem had a son, Jundhar, who is well known for being the father of twenty-one sons. He is the acknowledged progenitor of several Jat and Rajput clans in the Cis-Sutlej territory. The Rajputs of the Ferozepur district, the Bhais of Kaithal, the ruling houses of Patiala, Nabha and Jind and Faridkot claim Jundhar as their common ancestor and link back their genealogies with him⁶. Jundhar was succeeded by Bhatti Rai, who was again succeeded



1 Ancestors of Bhai of Kaithal.

2 Ancestors of Rajas of Faridkot

by Mangal Rai, and Mangal Rai was succeeded by Anand Rai 'alias' Und Rai. It is very difficult to determine their exact position and their dealings with fellow Rajputs of Jaisalmer or their relationship with Delhi Government if they had any. But this much appears to be certain that the conquest of India by Shahabuddin Ghori greatly altered the position and the circumstances of the descendants of Bhatti Raj'. Mangal Rai and Anand Rai were victims of the political catastrophe that followed after the conquest of India by the Muslims. Khiwa, the son of Anand Rai, was left forlorn. He shifted to Nali⁸ and settled at Kot Ladwa.⁹ Here he married a Jat girl of Baschra subcaste. This marriage was not liked by other Rajputs, who ostracized him and began to call him *Khat* (alloy) instead of *Khiwa*.¹⁰ To a superficial observer the marriage might appear the major incident, which turned the Rajput descendants of Khiwa into Jats. But if we go deep into the matter and study the history of the various Jat tribes who claim Rajput ancestry, it would be evident that in the early stages, distinction between Rajputs and Jats was occupational rather than ethnic.¹¹ Had the social and economic position of Khiwa been secure and had he been prominent politically, he would neither have taken to the profession of agriculture and cattle-breeding nor would have married a Jat girl. By this marriage, Khiwa had a son, Siddhu, who is considered the common progenitor of all Siddhu Jats. Siddhu is known as the father of many sons. One of his sons was Dhar (Varh) who is the ancestor of Bhais of Kaithal.¹² Siddhu settled at Sarai Nagar.¹³ One of the descendants of Siddhu was Brar. He was very stout and strong, and fought against the Bhattis with the help of his kinsmen. He settled at a village, Kakhanwali.¹⁴ Brar founded a new "got" (clan), "Siddhu Brar", which proved to be one of the most powerful tribes of the Cis-Sutlej territory. The chiefs of this tract mostly belong to this famous tribe. Brar had two sons, Dul and Paur.

From Dul descended the Rajas of Faridkot and to the Paur's line belong the Phulkian States of Patiala, Nabha and Jind. Dul was the elder son of Brar. So according to the custom of the times, the title goes to the ancestors of Rajas of Faridkot. Dul turned out of his house his younger brother, Paur who had to face many troubles.¹³ Sixth in line from Paur was Mehraj who lived in a village, Phodipur Jalalan. Mehraj had a son Pakho and Pakho had two sons, Mohan and Hubbal, who shifted to Bedowali, a village near Bhatinda. The place had been deserted by the descendants of Dul, who moved to the village Ablu in the erstwhile Faridkot state.¹⁴

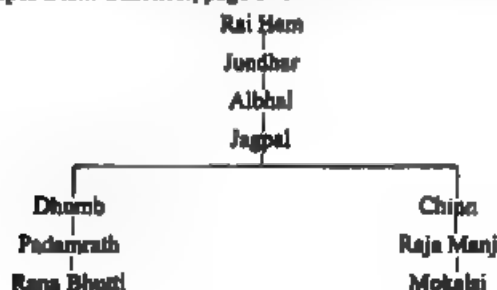
Mohan had six sons :

1. Roop Chand
2. Karam Chand
3. Kala (Bia Chand)
4. Kul Chand
5. Sema
6. Sardul¹⁷

The first four were by one wife and the last two by the other. At Bedowali, Mohan and his son were killed while fighting against the Bhattis. Roop Chand left behind two sons, Sandli and Phul. Kul Chand died young. Owing to constant animosity with Bhattis, Mohan's descendants were compelled to leave the place. After wandering about for some time, Kala along with the rest of the family came to the village Mari Siddh Qalandar¹⁸ which is situated at a distance of two miles from Rampura-Phul Railway station. The village had a *pucca* well, which belonged to the Bhullar Jats. They were at that time the sworn enemies of the Siddhus.¹⁹ They subjected Mohan's branch to all sorts of humiliations.²⁰ Fortunately for Kala, in 1631 A.D., Guru Hargobind Sahib came to Mari Siddh Qalandar. Kala went to the Guru and told him his piteous plight. The Guru²¹ gave him suitable advice and exhorted him to face the battle of life boldly and courageously.²²

References

1. Annals of Jessulmeer, Vol. II, page 1053. About the rule of Judo Bhatti tribe over the mountain of Jud, Babar, the great Mughal Emperor, writes : Seven Koa from Behra to the north, there is a hill. This hill according to Timur's Zafar Nama and some other books is called the hill of Jud. At first I was ignorant about the name but afterwards discovered that in this hill there are two races of men, descendants of the same father. One tribe is called Jud, the other Janjebeh. From the ancient times, they had been the rulers and lords of the hill. *Memoirs of Babar Vol. II translated, by Erskine, page 43.*
2. Annals of Jessulmeer-Vol. II, page 1060.
Aina-i-Brar Bans. Vol. I, page 23.
3. Utbi writes in Tarikh-i-Yamani about Mahmud's campaign against Bijay Rai :- "Mahmud collected armies with trustworthy guides and valiant standards and crossing the Indus in the neighbourhood of Multan he marched towards the city of Bhatia; the walls of which the wings of Eagle could not surmount and which was surrounded by a ditch of exceeding depth. The city was rich as imagination can conceive in property, armies and military weapons. There were elephants as headstrong as Satan. The ruler at that time was Bijay Rai and the pride which he felt in his State induced him to leave the walls of this fort and come forth to oppose the Mussalmans in order to frighten them with his warriors, elephants and great prowess. The Sultan fought against him for three days and nights. On the fourth morning a most furious onslaught was made with swords and arrows which lasted till noon when the Sultan ordered a general charge to be made. In this single charge he took several elephants which Bijay Rai regarded as his chief defence of his centre. At last God granted victory to the standards of Islam. Rai saw that there was no chance of escape, he drew his dagger, struck it into his breast and went to the fire which God had lighted for the infidels."
- Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II, page 29-30.
4. According to the genealogy given in Aina-i-Brar Bans Vol. I, page 26.
5. Aina-i-Brar Bans, vol. I, page 26, Punjab States Gazetteer, page 25
6. The following is the genealogical table of Many Rajputs given in the Ferozpur Dist. Gazetteer, page 84 :-



7. The Court histories like authors of *Tarikh-i-Patala* and *Aina-i-Barar Bans* give the following exaggerated account of the exploits of Hem and his successors. But such accounts do not find any confirmation from independent or Muslim sources. "When Sultan Shahabuddin conquered India in 1199 A.D. Rao Hem was summoned to Delhi and was asked to surrender the territory which he occupied. But he argued that the country had been ruled by his forefathers and threatened the Emperor that if the territory was not bestowed on him, he would indulge in loot and plunder. Qhori confirmed him in his possessions."

Tarikh-i-Patala, page 26.

"Owing to the jealousy with the Bhattis, Panwar Rajputs persuaded the Delhi Emperor to invade Rao Jundhar, son of Hem. A battle was fought in which 75,000 men were killed on the Emperor's side and Jundhar came out victorious."

Aina-i-Barar Bans, Vol. I.

8. The Nali or the Sotar or Sot include the whole of the Chaggar valley and the country immediately adjoining it. Both names refer especially to the hard alluvial soil and are applied by all classes of people to this valley, not only within the district but for a long way both above and below it.

Sirsa Distt. Settlement Report, 1779-83, page 29

9. Kot Ladwa was near Sirsa. *Raj Khalsa* by Guru Gran Singh, page 1 (Urdu).

10. *Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran* by Sir Atar Singh MS., page 15.

11. It is believed that those families of that common stock whom the tide of fortune has raised to the political importance have become Rajputs almost by mere virtue of their rise; and that their descendants have retained the title and its privileges on the conditions, strictly enforced, by observing the rules by which the higher are distinguished from the lower in the Hindu scale of precedence; of preserving their purity of blood by refusing to marry with families of inferior social rank, of rigidly abstaining from widow marriage and or refraining from degrading occupations. Those who transgressed these rules have fallen from their high position and ceased to be Rajputs; while such families as attaining dominant position in their territory, began to affect social exclusiveness and observe the rules, have become not only rajas but also Rajputs-sons of Rajas. So the distinction between Rajputs and Jats is social and occupational rather than ethnical. Dobson, *Punjab Castes, and Tribes*, page 100.

12. *Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran* MS. page 16.

13. In Tehsil Mukhtsar of Ferozepur District. *Tarikh-i-Bangla Fazilka* (No 34).

14. *Tarikh-i-Bangla Fazilka* (No 34.)

15. Ibid.

16. *Tazkira-i-Khanda-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian*.

17. *Tazkira-i-Khanda-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian*.

18. *Tarikh-i-Mukhtsar and Mamdoi* by Syed Nisar Ali, page 292.

19. According to Punjab States Gazetteer, the Bhullars are said to have been driven by Sikhs from Mari in Ferozepur district. Hence Bhullars, synonym for Maris.

20. *Tarikh-i-Pargana Mukwar and Mandot*, page 292.
Gurpartap Surya, Ras X; Sakhiyan Bhai Mool Chand, page 105.
21. The place is now Called Gurwar (Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature—*Mahan Kosh* by Bhai Kahn Singh in Punjabi). According to Bhai Santokh Singh (Gurpartap Surya) and Bhagwan Singh (Sakhiyan Bhai Mool Chand MS. Gurmukhi), it was Guru Har Rai Ji who helped Mohan's branch in founding village Mehraj and blessed Phul with prosperity and future greatness. But all the Patiala records emphatically assert that it was Guru Hargobind Ji who helped in founding the village Mehraj and gave the blessings.

مولد مرہن محمد مت گوردہرگ بد صاحب پیش آمدہ در موضع مہراجے داشت بتقریب
 اعانت باطنی گوردہرگ بنہا افواج شاہی مقابلہ کرد و فوج بسبب بے آب و دلیو مندر بنہا و پس
 بقیہ رفت۔ گوردہرگ بنہا در حق مولد مرہن و مالے خیر داد۔

Tazkira-i-Khanda-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian (MS. Persian)

از آنجا برخاستہ در ہائیگ موضع مہراج آباد است آمدہ جسکے اخلافت یعنی فرود شدہ نہ
 دقتا تا ہر بنہا خواستہ بانہا مقابلہ دمتا کہ نور محمد کو شہید ایزدی بر دل جاری شدہ
 بڑو کہ کاپرسکھاں مدفن پذیر شدہ۔ افواج شاہی بسبب بے آبی شکست خوردہ باز گشتہ در مرہن
 در ہانجا یکے اور در موضع مہراجے آباد ساختہ نہ

Tarikh-i-Punjab by Bute Shah Vol. I, Page 294.

پس در وقت شاہجہاں بادشاہ افواج شاہی بہ تاقب گوردہرگ بنہا بک مالہ جنگ ملت۔
 تھکے نیم در اس ملک آتا در مستی مرہن بن چنگر بن ستیرین ہراج قوم جٹ ساکن موضع
 بید و دل کہ بترائی بختہ دالے است۔ از آنجا برخاستہ در ہائیگ مہراج الحال آباد است
 آمدہ یک انداخت یعنی فرود شدہ نہ۔ دقتا تا گوردہرگ بنہا آبخار رسیدہ۔

Kitab-i-Kalifat-i-Phulkian (MS. Persian)

ہستہ میں کہ جہاں اب موضع مہراج آباد ہے لڑاکو جیسے لیا اور اس محاذوں کو پہلے دادا کے
 نام پر آباد کیا اور ایک غلٹس پرانا نام کے ساتھ جو مہراج کی آبادی میں جاری تھا اور مرہن کے
 مقدمہ گوردہرگ بد صاحب اور ان کے سرخیل کو خلیفہ بنا تھا۔ ایک زمانے میں جس میں
 پتا نا مرہن کے بیٹے کالے کے استوں مانگی پھر اوٹ ہی روح سے لائی ہوئی جو گوردہرگ بنہا
 صاحب کے تاقب میں آئی تھی۔

Tarikh-i-Patiala, page 32.

It is just possible that the blessings might have been confirmed by Guru Har Rai Ji who also visited Gurwar.

Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature

For further detail see the chapters "Ancestors."

APPENDIX NO. 2

Successors of Baba Ala Singh

Baba Ala Singh had three sons—Sardul Singh, Lal Singh, Bhumia Singh¹. Bhumia Singh died young, leaving behind one daughter, Rajinderan. Lal Singh, the youngest son, died issueless. Sardul Singh had two wives, Hukman and Resan. The latter was the widow of his cousin Jodha Singh, son of Sabha Singh, the elder brother of Baba Ala Singh. By Hukman, Sardul Singh had Amar Singh and by Resan, Himmat Singh. Amar Singh succeeded his grandfather, as Sardul Singh also died during the lifetime of his father.

During the reign of Maharaja Amar Singh the glory and prestige of Patiala State reached the highest pitch. He obtained the title of *Raja-i-Rajgan* from Ahmad Shah Abdali². He successfully waged a war against the Bhattis and added territories of his kingdom. In a punitive expedition, he killed Jodha of Bhatinda. He also repelled the Maratha tide of aggression under Janko Rao³. Maharaja Amar Singh died in 1781 A.D. The early death of the Maharaja at the age of thirtyfive was a great loss to the House of Patiala, and Griffin has rightly stated :-

“If Raja Amar Singh had lived or had been succeeded by rulers as able as himself, the Cis-Sutlej states might have been welded into one kindom and their independence might have been preserved both against Lahore Monarchy on the one hand and the British Government on the other”. He was succeeded by his minor son, Sahib Singh. Maharaja Sahib Singh's reign (1781-1813 A.D.) was full of internal calamities and external aggressions. In 1783 A.D. there occurred a very severe famine, which devastated the whole area of Tobana, Jamalpur and Ratia. These territories had been conquered and resettled by Baba Ala Singh and Maharaja Amar Singh⁴. Another event of note was the Maratha invasion of the Patiala territory. The gallant leadership of Bibi Sahib Kaur, the

Maharaja's sister, averted this danger by defeating the Marathas near Shahabad⁶. It was during Maharaja Sahib Singh's reign that all the Sutlej States accepted the British protectorate. Maharaja Sahib Singh died in 1813 A.D. and was succeeded by his minor son, Karam Singh.

Maharaja Karam Singh followed a Pro-British policy and helped the British to force the Gurkha troops to retire from the Simla Hills during the Gurkha War of 1814. Later on he declared that he was with the British in the first Anglo-Sikh War. But soon after he died in December 1845. He was succeeded by Maharaja Narinder Singh

The most important event during the reign of Maharaja Narinder Singh was the Indian Mutiny of 1857 A.D. The Maharaja sided with the British because he did not want to revive the old, degenerate and oppressive rule of the Mughals. The Maharaja died in 1862 and was succeeded by his minor son, Mohinder Singh. Maharaja Mohinder Singh's reign is associated with multifarious welfare measures. He contributed largely to the construction of the Sirhind Canal. He opened the Mohindra College at Patiala and donated Rs. 70,000 to the Punjab University, Lahore. He died in 1876 A.D. and was succeeded by his son, Rajinder Singh, who was also a noble soul and continued the welfare work of his father. Maharaja Rajinder Singh died in 1900 A.D. and was succeeded by his son, Bhupendra Singh.

Maharaja Bhupendra Singh was a great politician and took active part in political affairs. He was the life-Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. He attended the Imperial War Conference in 1918 and represented the Indian princes there. He was a renowned player of Polo and Cricket. He died in 1938 A.D. and was succeeded by his eldest son, Yadvindra Singh.

Maharaja Yadvindra Singh had been Rajpramukh of Patiala and East Punjab States Union. He was known for his

relief measures to settle refugees from West Pakistan. He had deep sympathies with the people and has always stood for the welfare of the masses. He abolished oppressive agrarian laws in order to encourage agriculture. In this respect he has completed the work of the advancement of agriculture which was initiated by his great ancestor Baba Ala Singh.

In the field of politics, His Highness has played a prominent part. As Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, he gave very sound and patriotic lead to the Indian princes and persuaded them to join the Indian Union at the most critical time of our history. The Sardar Vallabbhai Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister of India, paid him a very glowing tribute while inaugurating the Patiala and East Punjab States Union in 1948.

"I must mention the noble contribution which His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala made to the unity and integrity of India. He took up the cause of the country at a time when there were few friends amongst the Princely Order and when serious attempts were being made to *Balkanize* India by means of one or more *Rajasthans*. It was his patriotic lead that contributed in large measure to a change in the attitude of the Princes to the problem of accession to the Indian Dominion."

Maharaja Yadvinder Singh died on June 17, 1974 at Hague where he had been posted as Indian Ambassador. His body was flown to Patiala where he was cremated with full state honours.

References

1. *Risala-i-Rajju Singh*.
2. *Khasana-i-Amara*, page 107.
Styar-ul-mutakhharan, page 112.
3. *The Rajas of the Punjab*, page 51.
4. *The Rajas of the Punjab*, page 53.
5. *Boundary Dispute Correspondence vol 1*.
6. *Rajas of the Punjab*, page 76.
7. *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol. IV, Punjab University, Patiala.

APPENDIX NO. 3

Ladies of Note closely connected with Baba Ala Singh.

One of the most remarkable women of the times was Fateh Kaur, the wife of Baba Ala Singh. She was the daughter of Khanan of village *Kaleke*¹. Fateh Kaur possessed an extraordinary intellect and courage and she used to help Baba Ala Singh in his political affairs. It was Fateh Kaur, who at the time of plunder of Barnala wisely left the place and appointed a deputation to negotiate peace with Ahmad Shah Abdali (1761) who was on his way to Kabul after the Battle of Panipat. She was successful in her attempt as peace was concluded on payment of tribute². Again it was Fateh Kaur's sane advice which saved Baba Ala Singh from complication. After the sack of Sirhind and the death of Zain Khan, Baba Ala Singh wanted to have the possession of the city of Sirhind. But it was Fateh Kaur who rightly advised him not to hanker after the possession of that accursed city because it would lower the prestige of Baba Ala Singh in the eyes of the Sikhs³ in general as no Sikh Chief was prepared to accept the occupation of the same owing to its horrible memories of the death of the Guru's sons.

Baba Ala Singh always benefitted of his sagacious wife. It was owing to her influence that Baba Ala Singh's relations with the family of Bhai Bhagtu, of one of the most⁴ revered Sikh families of Cis-Sutlej territory, were cemented. Bhai Gurbaksh Singh of this family, who later on became the founder of Kaithal State, helped Baba Ala Singh in his conquest of Boha, Buddhlada⁵, Tolana and Jamalpur⁶. Moreover Fateh Kaur had devoted herself to the service of the *Dal Khalsa* and used to serve the Sikhs in the common Kitchen⁷. Her services in the common kitchen brought Baba Ala Singh in close contact with *Dal Khalsa* and strengthened his ties with Sikhs in general.

Fateh Kaur lived for eight years after the death of her husband and it was during this period that her extraordinary wisdom and political sagacity came into play. Just after the death of her husband she installed Amar Singh on the throne. This action of hers was so prompt and her influence was so great that there was no opposition from the officials and all the courtiers recognized Maharaja Amar Singh to be the lawful ruler. Himat Singh, the half-brother of Amar Singh, being elder than Amar Singh, considered his own right to the throne. He, therefore, raised the standard of revolt and seized the fort of Bhawanigarh with its neighbouring territory. On hearing this Maharaja Amar Singh led an expedition to suppress the rebellion. At this critical juncture, Fateh Kaur's political sagacity and wisdom saved the situation. She persuaded the brothers to arrive at a compromise. Himmat Singh was allowed to retain his possessions⁸.

This great lady who can rightly be called one of the builders of the Patiala Kingdom died in 1773 A.D.⁹.

By Fateh Kaur, Baba Ala Singh had one daughter named Pardhan. She was married to Mohar Singh Randhawa of village Ramdas (District Amritsar). Pardhan was blessed with a son, Bhup Singh, who died in childhood. Later on, she could not pull on well with her husband, who had brought a second wife. She retired to her parental village Barnala.

After her arrival at Barnala, Pardhan devoted herself to religious pursuits and spent her time in meditation on God. Baba Ala Singh granted her a *Jagir* and appointed Bhai Nikka Singh a learned Sikh to teach her the holy words of the Guru from the Holy Granth. He also got erected separate residential quarters (Derah) and a Gurdwara for Bhai Nikka Singh, who was later on succeeded by Baba Gandha Singh. She also started school (Pathshala) for religious instructions to the children¹⁰

This pious lady left her earthly abode in 1789¹¹. Her charitable institutions at Barnala still commemorate her pious memory.

Another remarkable lady who was very closely connected with Baba Ala Singh and had played a prominent part in the history of Patiala Kingdom was, Rajindran, the granddaughter of Baba Ala Singh. She was the daughter of Bhumia Singh, the son of Baba Ala Singh. Rajindran was married to Choudhary Tilok Chand, the grandson of Choudhary Chuhan Mal of Phagwara. Her husband died young leaving behind one daughter. On the death of her husband, she herself had taken possession of a half of the estate leaving the other half for his brother-in-law (Husband's brother)¹².

Rajindran was a lady of remarkable courage and intellect. When Baba Ala Singh was arrested by Ahmad Shah Abdali on account of his arrears in tribute and was being taken to Lahore in the royal train (1765 A.D.), Rajindran approached her grandfather. She offered to deposit the money and to secure the release of Baba Ala Singh's person. But the latter tactfully declined the offer by saying that it was not proper to accept money from the daughter.

Even after the death of her grandfather, Rajindran always stood with Maharaja Amar Singh, her cousin brother, to preserve the integrity of the Patiala State. When in 1778 A.D. Maharaja Amar Singh was defeated by Hari Singh Sialba, Rajindran with three thousand soldiers came to assist her brother in the fight against the enemy, who was ultimately reduced to submission.¹³

During the reign of Maharaja Sahib Singh, it was Rajindran who made the greatest efforts to defend Patiala from the Maratha inroads. She, accompanied by a strong force, went up to Muthura in order to reach some understanding with the Marathas. But her services were not recognised. Soon after she died in 1791 A.D.¹⁴

References

1. *Tazkira-i-Khandan-i-Raja ha-i-PhulKian.*
2. *Tarikh-i-Patiala.*
Tazkira-i-Khandan-Rajaha-i-Phulkian
3. *Tarikh-i-Sikhan*, Khushwaqat Rai.
4. *Kaifiat-i-Bhai Kiyon* (MS. Persian).
It is stated in *Kaifiat-i-Bhai Kiyon* that whenever there was any trouble, Fateh Kaur used to bring Baba Ala Singh to Bhuchok where the family of Bhai Bhagtu was living.
5. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 53.
6. *Boundary Dispute*, Volume No. I.
7. *Patiala Raj Dian Parsidh Bibian* (Gurmukhi).
8. *The Rajas of the Punjab.*
9. *Patiala Raj Dian Parsidh Bibian.*
10. *Patiala Raj Dian Parsidh Bibian.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *The Rajas of the Punjab*, p. 71.
14. *Ibid.*

APPENDIX NO. 4.

Marathi References on Baba Ala Singh

**From Vasu Deva Dikshitam to the Peshwa
(Balaji Baji Rao).**

Nagar Mal, the representative of Salabat Jang at Delhi has dispatched a pair of messengers who reached Aurangabad after 18 days and who re-started for Salabat Jang's camp. Valji the chief messenger orally gave out the news brought by the pairs :-

"While the Pathan's son was carrying away the treasure, Ala Jat, the resident of Sirhind, a place about two hundred miles from Delhi and Sikhs of the Sect of Nanak united together, over-powered the Pathan's son by blocking his way and completely snatched away his treasure".

Selection from Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 21 letter No. 116.

From Laxman Appaji Ekbote to the Peshwa

"I was deputed by the Bhau to Sirhind along with Laxmi Narain. When misfortune fell over army, Laxmi Narain being a Hindustani, secured a place for himself. With 50 or 60 Maratha Sowars, I was left in the lurch. There was no place at all. A heavy rush followed. So I approached Ala Singh Jat who out of regard for your honour, gave me shelter. Up to now I am with the Jat Sardar.

"Your honour had sent some letters to Ala Singh Jat, which have been replied by the Jat. All the details will be known from them.

"Your servant searched for the dead body in this province, but no trace could be found. I am conducting further searches.

"Abdali has left Delhi and is on his way to his own

country. He had reached Sirhind where he is staying for two or three days."

Selection from Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 27, letter No. 262.

Purushottama Maha Deva (Higne) requests the Subedar Sahib (Malhar Rao Holkar) thus: "I am happy at Shamli, included in the province of Intervel (delta between the Jamna and the Ganges) till the 1st of Shahban. Your honour must have known the happenings here through my detailed letters sent with about five pairs of couriers but I have neither received any reply nor any pair has returned as yet. At present Abdali has marched from Lahore, has pursued the Sikhs, has reached the Sutlej within two days with light equipment and has given a battle with Sikhs. About seven thousand Sikhs have perished. Some were imprisoned and some took to heels. Now he is at a distance of forty miles beyond Sirhind. He wishes to encamp at Sirhind for some days and has repaired the garden Shalimar in Sirhind with that view. Raja Lakshmi Narain of Sirhind who was formerly the servant of our government and who is now the *Dewan* (manager) of Zain Khan, the *Faujdar* of the Shah, has planned and attacked on the fortress of Ala Jat by promising a ransom of fifty lakhs of rupees to the Shah. This will take more months."

Rajwade, Vol. VI, letter No. 465.

"The servants Bapuji Mahadeva and Purshottama Maha Deva (Higne) request his honour Nana Swami after many obeisances thus : We are happy at Sirhind till the 11th of Shahban and expect to hear the same about your honour. We have received no reply though we have sent to your honour letters from time to time. We, therefore, request your honour to write us about your honour's good health every now and then. Presently Shah Abdali marched from Lahore with light

equipment and gave a battle with Sikhs near Sirhind. Then he invaded the territory of Ala Jat, after arresting him, devastated his territory, returned to Lahore with him and sent him to Kandhar. We have received the news to the above effect.

Rajwade Vbl. VI, letter No. 382.

APPENDIX NO. 5.

The Firman of 21st Ramzan

In the Patiala Archives there is preserved one firman with the following contents:-

One Square Seal (with following dim words on it)

Abul Fatah Nasiruddin Mohammad Shah.

اگر مہدیہ دستگیر دولت آقاہ فرزند پادشاہ اہل اقل میر محمد گنہگار مہمانیہ میری
 مقررہ مال میں حضرت مسیحیہ اگر درویش سرینہ دست اندازی شب و روز
 مقررہ مال میں دست چکی گناہ و نیرو دیال آقاہ دست رکب عالی و دیگر ہم باطنی ہیں
 ہر ہر مائدہ چل دیں نہیں مقررہ مال میں و ملاست۔ لہذا فرماں مقررہ مال میں کرمت
 مقررہ مال میں از دور و دست میری سرینہ مال میں و مسیحیہ مال میں ہر ہر مقررہ مال میں و مقررہ مال میں
 پادشاہ مقررہ مال میں مقررہ مال میں پادشاہ مقررہ مال میں و مقررہ مال میں و مقررہ مال میں
 مقررہ مال میں پادشاہ مقررہ مال میں پادشاہ مقررہ مال میں و مقررہ مال میں و مقررہ مال میں
 مقررہ مال میں پادشاہ مقررہ مال میں پادشاہ مقررہ مال میں و مقررہ مال میں و مقررہ مال میں
 مقررہ مال میں پادشاہ مقررہ مال میں پادشاہ مقررہ مال میں و مقررہ مال میں و مقررہ مال میں
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 مقررہ مال میں پادشاہ مقررہ مال میں پادشاہ مقررہ مال میں و مقررہ مال میں و مقررہ مال میں

In the name of Raja Ala Phul, (our) well-wisher, possessor of loyalty, displayer of fidelity, shelter of gentility, resident of Padaur (Bhadaur)—he may be apprised. The firman of exalted His Majesty has reached just now that in the vicinity of Sirhind, the door of the high handedness of the night raiders and mischief mongers has opened. The whole country has fallen desolate and masterless and country of Nali and its surroundings have also met the same fate. Since in this connection there is displeasure of the exalted temperament the high powered and generosity entitling order, through excessive kindness along with Mir Manno Khan and Samiyar Khan has

therefore, been despatched towards you. It is incumbent that the above mentioned territory be occupied and its rehabilitation be regarded as essential on your part and your seat of residence should be shifted from Padaur (Bhadaur) and efforts should be made towards its rehabilitation. In this respect after ascertaining (your) diligence, the title of raja will be bestowed upon you. Moreover the route from Lahore to Delhi is perilous. The population of the same is also very essential. In addition to the previous territory of Padaur (Bhadaur) Phul etc. already in your possession the above mentioned territory is also bestowed upon you. Further more you should take care of the fief-holders and old *rajas* under your protection and you should remain in co-operation with them. In future taking note of the place and prosperity orders will be issued to you.

Written on 21st of the month of Holy Ramzan of the year 1127 Hijri. viz Sept. 9, 1715 A.D.


The above noted Firman establishes the following conclusions :-

1. The Firman is dated Ramzan 21, 1127 or 37, as figure 2 is not clear.
2. In the period to which the Firman refers the road from Delhi to Lahore was not safe and the *Jagirdar* of the Cis-Sutlej territory had no sense of security.
3. Ala Singh at that time was the resident of Bhadaur which has been mentioned twice.
4. The Nali territory was bestowed on Ala Singh in addition to his own territory.

Let us scrutinise all these conclusions with reference to their historical background.

1. The Firman is dated Ramzan 21, 1127 Hijri. Some historians like the author of *Tarikh-i-Patiela* and Mohammad Latif and

some contemporaries too¹, perhaps taking into consideration the long dot of figure two (2) conclude that the date of Firman is Ramzan 21, 1137 Hijri (1725 A.D.) But the internal evidence of the Firman itself leads us to conclude that the Firman is dated Ramzan 21, 1127 Hijri. (1715 A.D.). The mention of insecurity of the travellers on road from Delhi to Lahore and the unsafety of *Jagirdars* leads us to conclude that Firman does not belong to the year of 1725 A.D. (1137 Hijri) and it has been rightly dated i.e. 1127 Hijri (1715 A.D.). Item No. 2 & 3 will make this point more clear.

2. It is clearly stated that road from Delhi to Lahore is perilous  (*Kharabasti*) and it needed to be populated the *Jagirdars* in Cis-Sutlej area were not safe and needed protection by some strong hand. Exactly these are the conditions which have been mentioned by one contemporary historian of the time, Khafi Khan. He writes "The *Caravans* passing from Delhi to Kabul were looted and plundered by Isa Khan. The Imperial officer who had been assigned *Jagirs* (in the Sirhind territory) could not get a penny from their villages as the rents were forcibly collected by Isa Khan¹." It is agreed on all hands that Isa Khan had grown to be the most powerful noble during the reign of his patron Jahandar Shah (1712-13) after which he took to looting and plundering. It is also agreed on all hands that he died in 1718 A.D.² The condition of the country described in the Firman is exactly the same as described by Khafi Khan before the death of Isa Khan³. Hence it can safely be concluded that the Firman is rightly dated 1127 Hijri i.e. 1715 A.D. when Isa Khan was alive and was "fishing in the troubled waters" as the whole of the official machinery at that time was directed for the suppression of Sikhs and the arrest of Banda Singh Bahadur.

Besides this there is another proof which clearly indicates that the Firman relates the conditions of 1127 Hijri i.e. 1715

A.D. It is stated in the Firman that Ala Singh was the resident of Bhadaur. There is no mention of Barnala where to Ala Singh migrated after the death of Isa Khan (1718 A.D.).⁵ In 1715 A.D. a year after the death of his father, Ala Singh was putting up with his elder brother Dunna Singh at Bhadaur⁶, which has been mentioned twice in the Firman. The general condition of the Cis-Sutlej territory at that time and Ala Singh's condition as stated in the Firman pertains to the year 1715 A.D. i.e. (1127 Hijri).

The most important aspect of the firman under consideration is that it bestows Nali territory to "Raja Ala Singh". The close scrutiny in this respect will throw light on the reasons for bestowing Nali territory on Baba Ala Singh and the authorship of the Firman. It is important to know what Nali territory means. The Nali territory—"The Nali or *Sotar* or *Sot*" - includes the entire Ghaggar valley and the country immediately adjoining it. The Nali territory was included in Hissar Sarkar. The Hissar Sarkar consisted of the following villages and towns :-

1. Agroha, 2. Ahroni, 3. Athkhere, 4. Bhawani Garh, 5. Punian, 6. Bharangi, 7. Bharwala, 8. Bhattu, 9. Birwa, 10. Bhatner, 11. Tohana, 12. Tosham, 13. Jind, 14. Jamalpur, 15. Hissar, 16. Dhatrat, 17. Sirsa, 18. Shoeram, 19. Sidhmukh, 20. Swani, 21. Shanzdehat, 22. Fatehabad, 23. Gohana, 24. Khanda, 25. Mihum, 26. Hansi.¹ Some of the important towns of Nali territory were Tohana, Jamalpur, Fatehabad, Sirsa and Hissar and all these towns were under the jurisdiction of the *Faujdar* of Hissar.

In the period to which the Firman pertains the *Faujdar* of Hissar was no less well-known a person than Shahdad Khan of Kasur, who ruled the Nali territory from 1707 to 1737 A.D.⁹ He was the same person who was deputed by Abdul

Smad Khan, the Governor of Lahore, to chastise Isa Khan, who had grown the most powerful man of the area. Shahdad Khan was successful in killing Isa Khan. It, therefore, looks most improbable that Shahdad Khan's territory might have been entrusted to Ala Singh in 1715 A.D. or even in 1725 (1137 Hijri) especially when he had not established his power.

There is a good deal of confusion in the Firman. The Firman is dated 1127 Hijri 1715 A.D. and it refers to the events of that time but on the seal there is the name of Nasir-ud-din Mohammad Shah who ascended the throne in 1719 A.D. The author of the Firman appears to have the knowledge of this confusion and he has tried his best to make the confusion confounded because he had written the word "Jalus" along with Hijri Era. It is a matter of common knowledge that there are two distinct eras used by the historians and writers. Mostly the Muslim writers use Hijri era and also San-i-Jalus-i.e. Era which begins with the succession of the Emperor. Evidently enough, 1127 (figures) pertains to the Hijri Era, which he had indicated by writing the word Hijri. But at the same time he has written the word "Jalus" after the same figure.

The most important factor which causes serious doubt about its genuineness is its absence from the early Patiala Records like Tazkira-i-Khandan-i-Raja-ha-i-Phulkian. There is no mention of this Firman anywhere. Kapur Singh, Attorney of Maharaja Karam Singh, who fought for the cause of Patiala Chief in the boundary dispute with East India Company does not mention this Firman anywhere even though it referred to the territory under dispute i.e. Nali territory. It appears that it was not there upto the 1836 A.D. and it has been inserted in the Patiala records later on.

Besides this, even if we take this Firman to be true, it

appears to be a foreign element in the harmonious development of the life of Baba Ala Singh. Had any Imperial Firman been issued to Baba Ala Singh, he would have derived full benefit out of it. But on the other hand we find that Baba Ala Singh was imprisoned at the hands of Ali Mohammad Khan. In those days when the Baba Ala Singh was struggling hard to carve out his own principality any favourably gesture from Delhi Court would have meant a lot to Baba Ala Singh. Had Nali territory been bestowed upon him as is stated in this Firman he would have definitely acquired that territory one way or other. But we do not find any reference to this Firman in any of the records prior to Maharaja Karam Singh's reign.

The later historians, give the following reasons for the issue of the Firman.¹⁰ They hold that Baba Ala Singh had earned a lot of fame and renown by defeating the powerful Muslim confederacy of Rai Kalha and Asad Ali Khan and the fame of Ala Singh reached the Delhi Court, where Emperor Mohammad Shah issued above cited Firman. But if we critically study the dates of the issue of Firman as well as the date of the defeat of the Muslim confederacy by Ala Singh it will become crystal clear that the reasons given above cannot hold the ground. It is agreed by all authorities that Sonde Khan did not die earlier than 1730 A.D.¹¹ Hence the date of the defeat of the Muslim confederacy by Ala Singh cannot be earlier than 1730 A.D. But the Firman is dated 1715 or 1725. Hence it cannot be established that the Firman was issued due to the Ala Singh's brilliant victory over his powerful neighbours.

If we critically examine the date of the issue of the Firman the reasons for the issue of the same, and the contents of Firman, we cannot believe it to be a genuine one. It gives authority to Ala Singh to own the territory (Nali territory), which remained under dispute from 1803-1856 A.D. and yet strangely enough it finds no mention in the Boundary Dispute

Correspondence which gives minute details about the villages under dispute. All this evidence leads us to conclude that it has been inserted in the Patiala records later on by some clever courtier in order to please the Patiala Chief. Surely this Firman deserves the same treatment as has been meted out to its likes in the pages (278-279) of the *Rajas of the Punjab*, by Griffin.

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1. S. Ganda Singh, Director of Archives Patiala vide his article in *Jivan Sandesh's History Number*.
2. *Muntakhib-ul-Lubab* by Khafi Khan Vol 2, pp. 767-768.
He is the same Khafi Khan who has given the graphic details about Banda ~~Bandah~~
3. (i) *Muasar-ul-Umara* (ii) *Ibrat Namah Mohammad Kasim* (iii) *Ibrat Namah Murza Mohammad*.
4. Khafi Khan writes that owing to the plundering expeditions of Isa Khan the caravans passing through Delhi and Kabul were not safe and no Jagirdar had the sense of security in that area. *Muntakhib-ul-Lubab Volume 2*, p. 767
5. All the historians agree that Ala Singh migrated to Barnala in 1718 A.D. *Tazkira-i-Khandan-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian. Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 40.
6. *Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand* (MS. Gurmukhi).
7. *Sirsa Settlement Report* p. 29.
8. *Hissar Gazetteer* p. 23.
9. *Hissar Gazetteer, Ibrat Namah, Mohammad Kasim, Persian MS.*
10. This brilliant success over the combined forces of the Rajputs and the Pathans spread terror throughout the neighbouring country and tended materially to strengthen the position of Ala Singh. The Sikhs across the Sutlej flocked to his standard and the number of his followers rapidly increased. He conquered many villages and built new ones. His fame reached Delhi and the Emperor Mohammad Shah deputed the Viceroy Mir Mazna and Samiyar Khan with a firman (Dated 21st Ramzan 1137, Hijri) asking Ala Singh to assist in the management of Sirhind and promising him the title of Raja if he acquitted himself to the satisfaction of the Imperial Court."

Latif's History of the Punjab, p. 326.

Petition of Ghulam Farid Khan and other Afghans and Bahadur Singh, resident of village Tohana in reply to the letter of His Highness Maharaja Sahib Bahadur dated Sawan Shudhi Panj 1877 B.K. - 11th August 1820.

The petition is being submitted to the hearing of the master of bounty, his exalted shadow be everlasting, his good fortune be eternal, by Ghulam Farid Khan, Jiwan Khan, Qadir Bakhsh, Nigahi Khan, Qalandar Bakhshi Khan, Daler Khan, Ibrahim Khan, Game Khan and rest all of the Afghans and Bahadur Singh Khatri, Tek Chand Khatri etc. etc. After carrying out the formalities of servitude and prostration, which is the custom of the old loyal subjects, we beg to say that generosity signifying and authority indicating letter for bringing out the condition of town Tohana in detail with explanation of previous and present condition beginning from the first year of the Majesty's administration in that town along with the number of years and loss of population and destruction and the reasons for the ruin of the said town and also circumstances of the invasion of the territory of zones, in the nearness of Tohana came to our hearing. From Sambat 1860 (B.K.) to say the truth without any deletion and addition in all sincerity and according to the correct findings, the state of affairs of Tohana is as follows :- That the said town is the seat of the Pargana under the administration of Hissar Feroza. First of all, Mir Asad Ali etc. Biloch collected the revenue of this place. Now seventy years had passed that from the beginning of Sambat 1807, the rule of Ala Singh began. The following persons named Gujar Khan, Khwaja Mohammad Khan, Anpajan and Abdul Rehman Khan and other Afghans of Tohana, the ancestors of the petitioners presented themselves to the presence of the esteemed Maharaja at Munak and accepted to pay the revenue to your government. The *thanedari* of this place was bestowed upon Sara Singh, Bika Singh Sekhon and Tehsildari in the name of Sahib Ram and later on Hazari Mal. For about

four years Afghans etc., landlords paid the revenue in cash and later on sometimes by Kankut and sometimes by kind. In Sambat 1814 (B.K.) Abdul Samad Khan, *Faujdar* of Sirhind along with Mohammad Amin Khan Bhatti came to Jamalpur and after having been defeated by the armies of Baba Ala Singh vacated Jamalpur. At that time also your rule at Tohana remained intact. In Sambat 1815 (B.K.) viz 1758 A.D. the employees of Baba Ala Singh constructed a fort of Tohana which still exists. From the beginning of Sambat 1807 your majesty's administration continued uninterrupted and without break in the town of Tohana for the period of thirtyfour years. Due to pillage involved in the movement of Armies of Baghel Singh and incidents of famine 1840, the residents of Tohana became destitute and in 1841 they were ruined at the hands of robbers.

Boundary Dispute vol. 1 (MS. Persian.)

N.B. - This document not only describes in detail Baba Ala Singh's occupation of Tohana but also throws a good deal of light on his way of administration.

APPENDIX NO. 7.

Bibliography

*Persian Manuscripts.***1. Boundary Dispute Volumes :-**

Four volumes (1st, 4th, 8th and 10th with A.R. No. 4409, 4396, 4398 and 4397) are in the Punjab Records Office, Simla, now in Punjab State Archives, Patiala and five volumes of the same series (3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th and one more) have recently been discovered by the author from the Commissioner's Office, Ambala Cantt.

The first volume is the most important and contains very authentic and valuable information regarding the territory conquered by Baba Ala Singh, which subsequently became the matter of dispute. It has references to the principles of settlement framed by Mr. B. Brown, the successor or Mr William Fraser, the District Officer, Hissar. The other volumes contain the statements and counter-statements of the various witnesses.

2. Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla, Khalsa College, Amritsar :-

Darbar-i-Mualla (Jaipur records) form one of the most important historical records giving minute details about the events in the North. News items are in the chronological order, beginning with dates in Hijri. We find frequent references to Sikhs in these records and some of them give useful information about activities of the Sikhs in the 18th century.

Akhbarat-i-Muttafarriqa (No. 18) is one of the most important records because it describes Baba Ala Singh's relation with Zain Khan, the Abdali Governor of Sirhind and also throws a good deal of light on Baba Ala Singh's relations with Najib-ud-daula. The following news items are important with regard to the history of Baba Ala Singh :-

Shaban 1172, Zil Ka'da 1174, viz 1759 A.D., 1760-61 A.D. respectively

28th Zil hijja, Muharram 1177, viz 1763-64 A.D.

9th Rajab 1177, 28th Zil hijja 1177, 1763-64 A.D.

17th Ramzan 1178 viz Feb. 8, 1765 A.D.

3. Tazkira-i-Khandan-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian :-

Transcribed copy, Khalsa College, Amritsar.

It is one of the most important manuscripts of the Patiala records. It was written during the reign of Maharaja Karam Singh (1813-1845 A.D.) by some courtier, whose name has not been mentioned. It is considered to be the oldest record on history of Patiala.

It gives a very sketchy account of Baba Ala Singh. Like other traditional accounts it is dominated by details of marriages and sons and the blessings of the holy. Almost every statement about Baba Ala Singh needs careful examination and scrutiny. At places it suffers from serious omissions.

4. Risala-i-S. Rajju Singh :-

Personal Library, Director of Archives, Patiala.

It is a small treatise on the division of the ancestral property of the descendants of Phul. It supplies details - names of villages, which Baba Ala Singh received as his share. It gives useful information about the circumstances, which led to the foundation of village Phul. It also contains personal details about marriage and sons etc.

This manuscript was written in Moharram, 1242 A H. (=1826 A.D.)

5. Ahwal-i-Khandan-i-Rajgan-i-Patiala :-

By Manna Singh Grewal, Himmat Singh Grewal and Bira Singh.

Personal Library, Director of Archives, Patiala.

This small manuscript was written in 1825 A.D. It contains very valuable information about Kanwar Himmat Singh, the grandson of Baba Ala Singh. It establishes the fact

that Baba Ala Singh was still in imprisonment when Kanwar Himmat Singh was born.

6. Kitab-i-Kaifiyat-i-Khandan-i-Bhai Kian :-

This is a manuscript of only a few pages bound with Tazkira-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian preserved in Patiala Archives. It traces the history of Bhai Bhagtu's family to which Bhai Gurbaksh Singh, the founder of the Kaithal State belonged. It gives the details of the cordial relationship between Baba Ala Singh and Bhai Gurbaksh Singh.

7. Ahwal-i-Khandan-i-Patiala wa Jind :-

It is a small manuscript in the personal library of Director of Archives, Patiala. It gives a good deal of information on the ancestors of Baba Ala Singh.

8. Ahwal-i-Khandan-i-Phulkian

9. Kitab-i-Kaifiyat-i-Phulkian :-

These are two very small manuscripts consisting of a few pages only, preserved in Patiala Archives. These two manuscripts are important ones because they, at places, supplement the information supplied by Tazkira-i-Rajaha-i-Phulkian.

10. Ibrat Namah by Mirza Mohammad :-

Transcribed copy, Khalsa College, Amritsar.

This manuscript is also known as "Swaneh Mirza Mohammad Harsi". It gives a lot of information about the events from 1705 to 1719 A.D. The author was contemporary of Aurangzeb.

The manuscript is very useful for writing historical background prior to the rise of Baba Ala Singh.

11. Tahmas Namah by Tahmas Khan Miskin.

Photostat copy (from British Museum) Khalsa College, Amritsar.

Tahmas Khan Miskin was the personal attendant of Mir

Manno Governor of Lahore (1748-1753) and later on he joined the service of Zain Khan, the Abdali *Faujdar* of Sirhind. The author was, therefore, eyewitness of so many important events.

This source is extremely useful for tracing Baba Ala Singh's relations with Najib-ud-daula and condition of Sirhind prior to the fall of Zain Khan.

12. Tazkira-i-Anand Ram Mukhlis, Part II.

Transcribed copy, Khalsa College, Amritsar.

The author Anand Ram Mukhlis was amongst the fighting forces of the Mughal Emperor Mohammad Shah and fought in the Battle of Manupur (1748). He graphically describes the valour and pluck with which Baba Ala Singh fought against Ahmad Shah Abdali.

13. Gulistan-i-Rahmat, by Mustjab Ali Khan.

Rampur State Library, Extract copy Khalsa College, Amritsar.

This is one of the most authentic history of Rohillas and it describes in detail the activities of Ali Mohammad Khan during his stay at Sirhind. It greatly helps us to determine date of imprisonment and period of imprisonment of Baba Ala Singh.

14. Gul-i-Rahmat :-

It is also a similar account of Rohillas and gives more or less the same information which is supplied by Gulistan-i-Rahmat.

15. Qazi Nur Mohammad's Jang Nama :-

Transcribed copy Khalsa College, Amritsar.

It has also been published by Sikh History Research Department, Khalsa College, Amritsar. 1939.

Qazi Nur Mohammad accompanied Ahmad Shah Abdali in his sixth invasion and he was the eye-witness of the glory and splendour of Baba Ala Singh.

It supplies one of the most important contemporaneous account which throws a flood of light on the character and career of Baba Ala Singh.

16. Tarikh-i-Salatn-i-Afghana, by Ahmad Yadgar.

Transcribed copy Khalsa College, Amritsar.

This important manuscript gives the history of the Afghan families in India and provides useful information. It supplies us with a dialogue between Ahmad Shah Abdali and Baba Ala Singh in which the latter was asked to remove his hair.

17. Ahwal-i-Najib-ud-daula, by Behari Lall.

This manuscript has been written in 1787 by Munshi Behari Lall son of Badri Dass of Bareilly. It contains the accounts of Najib-ud-daula, Ali Mohammad Khan and Dundi Khan.

It has decided very controversial issue about the time of the arrest of Baba Ala Singh.

18. Tarikh-i-Bina wa Aruj-i-Sikhan :-

Photostat copy Khalsa College, Amritsar.

This is a small manuscript written by Timur Shah. It gives a brief history of the Sikhs and supplies useful information regarding the military strength of Baba Ala Singh.

The following manuscripts give useful information regarding the events connected with the life of Baba Ala Singh:-

19. Tazkira-i-Imadul-mulk.

Transcribed copy Khalsa College.

20. Mukhlis-ul-Tarikh by Farzan Ali.

Transcribed copy Khalsa College.

21. Ahwal-i-Adina Beg Khan.

Transcribed copy Khalsa College Amritsar.

22. **Ibrat Namah Mohammad Kasim of Lahore.**
Transcribed copy Khalsa College, Amritsar.
23. **Tarikh-i-Bhau wa Janko.**
Transcribed copy Khalsa College, Amritsar.
24. **Tazkira-i-Shakir Khan.**
Transcribed copy Khalsa College, Amritsar.
25. **Tarikh-i-Hussain Shahi by Syed Imam-ud-din Hussain,** Transcribed copy Khalsa College, Amritsar.
26. **Risala-i-Nanak Shah by Budh Singh.**
Transcribed copy Khalsa College, Amritsar.
27. **Khalsa Namah by Bakhat Mal.**
Transcribed copy Khalsa College, Amritsar.
28. **Bayan-i-Waqayl, by Khwaja Abdul Karim.**
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29. **Tarikh-i-Punjab by Bute Shah, vol. I.**
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30. **Tarikh-i-Sikhan by Khushwaqat Rai**
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31. **Ibrat Namah Ali-ud-din.**
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32. **Ahwai-i-Najib-ud-daulah by Nur-ud-din.**
Photostat copy Khalsa College, Amritsar
Urdu Manuscripts.
1. **Tarikh-i-Siddhu Braran by Sir Attar Singh.**
Transcribed copy Khalsa College, Amritsar.
Sir Attar Singh Bhadaur was one of the direct descendants of Dunna Singh, elder brother of Baba Ala Singh. He has written this manuscript in 1867 A.D. and it gives

valuable details about family history of the descendants of Phul, the grandfather of Baba Ala Singh. Dates are often confusing and undependable.

2. Tazkira-i-Rajab Ali Khan :-

Transcribed copy Khalsa College, Amritsar.

This manuscript is the autobiography of Rajab Ali Khan of Jagraon who later on became the member of Board of Administration under Lawrence. It gives useful details about the life of Nawab Asad Ali Khan *Faujdar* of Jullundar Doab, who was killed in the battle of Barnala in 1731 A.D.

Gurmukhi Manuscripts.

1. Sakhian Bhai Mool Chand by Bhai Bhagwan Singh, Motibagh Palace Library, Patiala.

This important manuscript was written in 1793 A.D. It supplies very useful information not only about Baba Ala Singh, but also gives valuable details about the conditions of the times prior to the rise of the founder of Patiala State. It provides graphic descriptions of the famines and the Bhatti and Barar raids.

2. Jassa Singh Binod :-

Transcribed copy Khalsa College, Amritsar.

It is the biography of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and gives many details about the movements of Sikhs in the 18th Century. It provides useful information about Maharaja Ala Singh.

3. Travels of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. Khalsa College, Amritsar.

This manuscript not only gives details about the travels of the Gurus but describes war like habits of the Barars who constituted one branch of great Siddhu Barar tribe. It has since been published.

4. Phul Bana Parkash

Patiala Archives, Patiala.

This manuscript traces the history of Jind State—one of the Phulkian States. It gives useful information about the ancestors of Baba Ala Singh.

MARATHI RECORDS

The Marathi records are in the form of newsletters. Perhaps Baba Ala Singh (Ala Jat) is the only *misaldar* who is so frequently mentioned in the Marathi records of Abdali period. The following newsletters gives extremely valuable information.

Selection from Peshwa Daftar, Vol. 21 by G.S. Sardesai.

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4. **Shah Alam Nawab** by Ghulam Ali.

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7. Zafar Namah Guru Gobind Singh Ji.**8. Muqaddma Ahmad Shah Baba.**

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9

**Opinions of some prominent writers relating to the
First Edition of this book published under the title
Maharaja Ala Singh of Patiala and His Times**

1. *The writer narrates the events, which conclusively prove Maharaja Ala Singh's faithfulness towards the Dal Khalsa, his ambition to establish the Sikh rule and his love of high Sikh ideals. The book is a source of valuable information corroborated by historical data.*

Bhai Sahib Dr. Vir Singh ji, Amritsar.

2. *I can hardly add anything more to what author has so laboriously collected in short and concise compass. I am happy that the students of present day are studying afresh and put the past events on a sound historical basis. It is essential purpose of historical study to point out the past shortcomings and produce a correct picture to suit the present day awakening.*

Dr. G.S. Sardesai, Kamshet, Poona.

3. *A positive new light is brought to bear on the subject. It is drawn from untapped sources and relates to Ala Singh's relations with Marathas, with Najib-Ud-Daula and with Zain Khan, the Abdali Governor of Sirhind. The records of the Boundary Dispute Correspondence have also been used for the first time in this connection. In view of the fresh material used in this book, it can be considered as up-to-date record of events connected with Ala Singh.*

Principal Teja Singh, MA, Amritsar.

4. *Maharaja Ala Singh and His Times, is a distinct and noteworthy contribution to Sikh history. We see herein all essentials of scholarship.*

Dr. Mohan Singh, Punjab University, (now Chandigarh)

5. *From historical point of view this thesis has a great value as it makes good contribution towards the history of Cis Suttlej Sikhs.*

Dr. Hari Ram Gupta,
Head of History Deptt., Panjab University, Chandigarh.

6. *I have seen through the Manuscript entitled Maharaja Ala Singh by Professor Kirpal Singh. Painsstaking efforts seem to have been put in collection of relevant material. The result is an elaborate thesis embodying historical research.*

Dr. Balbir Singh, Ph.D. (London)

7. *The facts are mentioned after diligent research.*

S. B. Jodh Singh, M.A., M.L.C., Ludhiana.

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The book vividly describes the condition of the Cis-Sutlej territory in those days, paints a picture of chaos and anarchy then prevailing. This fact established Maharaja Ala Singh's pre-eminence as he was able to uproot the anarchy and give rise to a state which led a peaceful and prosperous existence.

The work presents Maharaja Ala Singh's Personality as a Sikh as well as a Statesman. As a true Sikh he helped the Marathas in the hour of their dire need. His friendly relations with powers which could be helpful in driving out the foreigners, throw light on him as a statesman of high calibre. In his dealings with the Mughals, the neighbouring rulers and the Pathan invaders, he effectively guarded the interests of his own country. The writer narrates the events which conclusively establish Maharaja's faithfulness towards the Dal Khalsa, his ambition to establish the Sikh rule and his love of high Sikh ideals.

Maharaja Ala Singh was superb in administrative ability. He dealt impartially with all religions, treated all his subjects alike and gave high posts to persons of all denominations purely on merit.

The book is a source of valuable information corroborated by historical data.



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AMRITSAR